



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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*Cabernet is a
Bordello
Pinot is a Casino*

2014 Pinot Noir All-Americans

At the end of each year I name my favorite Pinot Noirs for the year. It is the American way to name the best, but there were so many exceptional Pinot Noirs produced in 2014 in California and Oregon, the task was very challenging.

Picking the best in any lineup of wines is controversial, so this issue always provokes a response from readers. Some of your favorite wines or producers may not be included since tasting every American Pinot Noir release in any one year is an impossible task. For the Pinot Noir wines that were left out of the All-American awards this year, the words of Mark Twain ring true. "It's better to deserve honor and not have them, then to have them and not deserve them."

The following considerations explain how I choose the All-American Pinot Noirs:

- 1) I take my responsibility seriously and follow a number of regimented steps to arrive at the wines that I consider truly extraordinary and deserving of the title, "All-American." The wines are culled from both winery submissions and my personal cellar of purchased wines. The wines are all tasted in private at my home in a quiet setting in the late morning, and often again later in the day or the following day. The wines come directly from my home cellar at about 63°F and are tasted in Burgundy stems. I usually taste only 8 to 10 wines a day to give each wine the appropriate attention it deserves. I make several passes as I taste each wine carefully over the time needed for the wine to open up. Occasionally, I will decant a wine if the winemaker recommends it or I think aeration will benefit the evaluation.
- 2) I do not taste wines blind, but strive for integrity, consistency and objectivity. I frequently have the tech notes on each wine at hand, and that assists me further in understanding the wine.
- 3) I tend to focus on current drink ability since most consumers prefer to drink their North American Pinot Noir relatively young.
- 4) I often taste the best wines the following day from an opened and re-corked (but not gassed) bottle which gives me further insight into quality, balance and age ability of a wine.
- 5) I score all wines using the 100-point scoring system. My emphasis remains on concise, unpretentious, and understandable tasting descriptions intended to reveal the style and quality of the wine, and in turn, guide the consumer to Pinot Noir they might enjoy.
- 6) My scoring guidelines: 94-100 - Extraordinary; 90-93 - Outstanding; 86-89 - Very Good; 80-85. I do not publish reviews of wines that score less than 80 since I cannot recommend them. I use the Pinot Geek icon for Pinot Noir and the Golden Geek icon for Chardonnay for wines rated as extraordinary. The Pinot Value icon and Chardonnay Golden Value icon designate wines that offer an exceptional price/quality ratio. Generally, this will be a wine priced at or below \$35 that is also in the Very Good or above category.
- 7) I less often review Chardonnay and sparkling wines, and rarely other varietals.
- 8) I must wrestle with stylistic differences among Pinot Noirs. I make a concentrated effort to separate my personal Pinot Noir stylistic preferences from the objective assessment of the wines. In other words, I try to reward wines for their excellence regardless of style. It comes down to distinguishing between appreciating

and liking. As wine writer Jake Lorenzo has noted, "If the style is not one of my favorites, I hope I have the experience and generosity to appreciate what the winemaker set out to accomplish."

- 9) Pinot Noir is a chameleon of a wine making critical and precise evaluation very challenging. Pinot Noir can vary from bottle to bottle, day to day, and week to week. Bottle variation is particularly troublesome. Fortunately, I often have two bottles available when I review a wine, and I only report a review of the better or stellar bottle.
- 10) It is a truth that it is not what is said or written about a special wine, but what is emoted that truly defines a wine's greatness. Most American Pinot Noirs today are technically sound, but the All-Americans have a powerful charisma. Veronique Drouhin-Boss, the winemaker at Domaine Drouhin Oregon, has said it best. "There are plenty of good wines in the world that give you pleasure. A great wine gives you emotion."
- 11) The 2014 All-American Pinot Noirs were judged on merit, independent of price, case production, vintage and region of origin. Most wines tasted in 2014 were from the 2011, 2012 and 2013 vintages. It is somewhat unfair to compare wines from disparate vintages, but the evaluation of each wine is taken on its own merit in the context of the vintage which is known when the wine is reviewed.
- 12) I have no monetary arrangement with any winegrower or winery and do not accept advertising on my website. I do not receive or demand compensation from wineries to review their wines or publish their reviews.
- 13) Only finished bottled wines formally reviewed in controlled, and therefore comparable circumstances, are candidates for All-American consideration. I sample many wines casually at home at wineries (including barrel samples), at social dinners, at walk-around tastings at Pinot Noir festivals, at competitive wine judging events, at organized wine tastings and at winery-hosted dinners, but I do not include these wines in the All-American selection process. A few exceptions were made when wines were tasted in a sit-down formal format at wineries.
- 14) I review more California Pinot Noir than Oregon Pinot Noir. This is because I am based in California, I travel more often to California wine regions, there are significantly more producers of Pinot Noir in California compared to Oregon, and more samples are submitted to me for review from California. This in no way is a reflection of comparative quality or my personal preference between Pinot Noir from the two states.
- 15) Some wineries are deserving of multiple All-American awards, but can only receive a single first or second team award. Considering that some wineries only produce one or two Pinot Noirs while others release multiple wines, it seems only equitable to limit an All-American first team or second team award to one wine per winery.
- 16) As in football All-American teams, there are eleven Pinot Noir and Chardonnay All-Americans on a team. An extra "special teams" player was added this year making twelve on a team. The awarded wines are listed in alphabetical order.
- 17) A number of the wines are still available from the winery, retailers, or the secondary marketplace. If you cannot obtain a certain coveted All-American wine, remember that there will always be another vintage. Try to focus more on the producer than on any one wine as the best producers consistently craft quality wine across their lineup in each vintage. The wine may not be the same song, but it will have the same composer.

The **"2014 Winery of the Year"** is **White Rose Estate in the Dundee Hills of Oregon**. This winery was singled out for special recognition based on innovative winemaking practices and extraordinary offerings involving the entire winery output. A detailed feature on this winery and a review of current releases is offered later in this issue.

I have also recognized wineries whose wines I met with for the first time in 2013 and show special promise. I call this **"First Encounters of 2014."** These wineries are singled out later in this issue.

2014 California Pinot Noir First Team All-Americans

2012 Benovia Cohn Vineyard Sonoma County Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., 350 cases, \$70. Sourced from Benovia's historic Cohn Vineyard planted in 1970. This dry-farmed, 18-acre vineyard is planted to a massale selection of Pinot Noir (likely Martini and Pommard). Organically farmed for 6 years. Low yields of 1.25 tons per acre. 100% de-stemmed. · *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Vibrant, even exhilarating aromas of fresh cherries, spice and bark that hold up remarkably over time in the glass. Delicious layers of flavor featuring black cherry, black raspberry, brown spice, cherry licorice and toasty oak. Seamless, seductive and classy, with a finish of uncommon persistence. Lighter and more refined in this vintage, with more suavity and Pinot character. Still great two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 95*



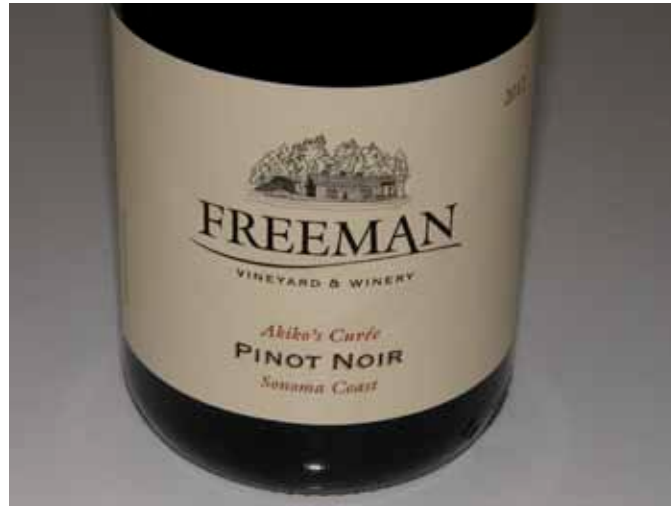
2012 Davis Family Vineyards Campbell Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., \$65. 5 to 7-day cold soak, native yeast fermentation, aged 10 months in 33% new, 33% once-filled, and 33% twice-filled French oak barrels. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. This is a stunning wine upon opening with invigorating aromas of fresh cherry tart, raspberry sauce and spice that jump from the glass. Very satisfying, with a silken richness of perfectly ripened wild berry and black cherry fruit accented with vanilla and a savory, dark sous-bois riff. The mid palate attack is vivid and mouth filling, and the generous finish echoes with an exotic goodness. This wine is blessed with perfect harmony between the supportive, sinewy tannins and the pleasing acid tension. It is scary to think this wine will undoubtedly improve over the new few years in bottle. A special occasion wine that reflects the extraordinary terroir of the West Sonoma Coast. 95*



2012 Freeman Akiko's Cuvée Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

405 cases, \$62. A barrel selection chosen by Akiko Freeman, Ed Kurtzman and assistant winemaker Mitchell Masotti. A blend of 6 vineyards with the most contributed by Campbell Ranch near Annapolis (clone 777) and the El Coro Vineyard at Keller Estate (Swan and La Tache selection). Aged 11 months in 33% new and 67% 1 to 4-year-old French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose was initially closed for business, opening slowly in the glass with swirling over time to reveal wonderful aromas of blackberry jam, black raspberry coulis, rose petal and spice. Delicious essence of fresh dark berries with hints of cola and Hoison sauce. Modest in weight, but highly flavorful, with suave tannins, a satiny smooth texture and an expansive finish. The balance is spot on and the overall impression is magical. You can drink it now for its elegance, but it will be even better after a few years in the cellar. Best Akiko's Cuvée ever. 95*



2011 LaRue Rice-Spivak Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

12.8% alc., 47 cases, \$N/A (allocation only). Katy Wilson's first vineyard-designated wine. This vineyard is 6-acres located south of the town of Sebastopol. Soils are Goldridge sandy loam and volcanic ash (the ash is unusual for this area). Dijon clones. Aged 17 months in 50% new French oak barrels, then aged another year in bottle before release. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A high brow nose featuring scents of cherries jubilee, baking spice and dried rose petals. Charming in every way, with fresh, bright cherry and raspberry flavors accented with spice. Noticeably seamless and elegant with an endlessly long peacock finish that lasts over a minute. Totally amazing and impossible to score. 97*



2012 Laetitia Whole Cluster Arroyo Grande Pinot Noir

14.2% alc., pH 3.78, TA 0.59, 420 cases, \$40. Harvest Brix 23.8°-26.8°. 45% whole cluster maceration and fermentation. Aged 11 months in 50% new French oak barrels. · *Moderate reddish-purple color in the glass. Better be sitting down when you drink this knock out wine. Copious aromas of black cherry, spice, rose petal and other exotic flowers. Reminds me of a classy woman's perfume. Seamless and sensual on the palate, offering a festival of spiced black cherries and black raspberries with perfectly integrated tannins and acidity, and a long, supple finish that leaves an impression. Everything good about whole cluster is exemplified in this beauty that has that magical je ne sais quoi that makes people go ga-ga over some red Burgundies.* **95**



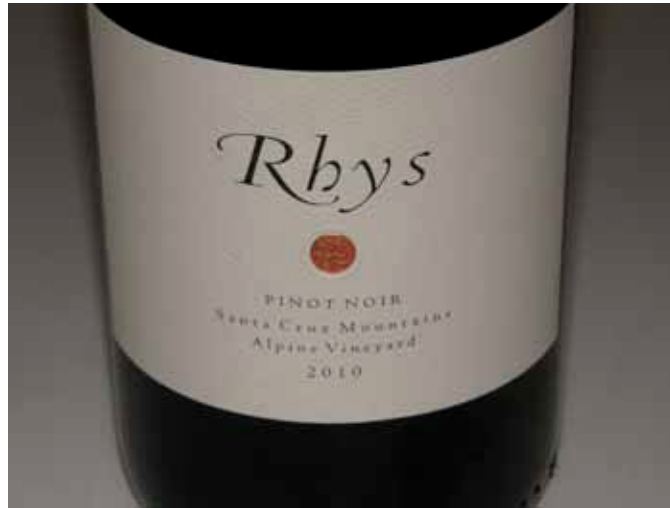
2012 Rivers-Marie Summa Vineyard Old Vines Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

13.3% alc., 275 cases, \$75. · *Moderately dark, very pretty garnet color in the glass. The aromas pull you into the glass with a fascinating array of scents including dark berry coulis, forest floor, molasses and even pulled pork. A delicious onslaught of dark plum and black raspberry fruit engages the palate with hints of earthy goodness and exotic spices. This wine has an exceptional presence on the palate. Beautifully composed, with supple, balanced tannins and integrated acidity, finishing with length and aplomb. An argument for old vines. Wines like this make you want to go to church to give thanks.* **96-97**



2010 Rhys Alpine Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir

13.7% alc., \$69. The vineyard is 11 acres situated at 1230 to 1400 feet elevation with a 20% to 40% slope. Soils are 20" to 24" topsoil over soft shale. Clones are Rhys selection and five heritage clones planted with 6' x 4' spacing. · *Oh My God! Orgasmic nose offering aromas of dark stone and berry fruits with a hint of whole cluster floral notes including violets. The aromas last and last in the glass. Flat-out delicious on the palate with layered flavors of dark plum and blackberry fruits with plenty of spice. Perfectly balanced with a silky smooth texture and a finish of uncommon length and intensity spiked with juicy mineral-driven acidity. Impressive grace and refinement and very approachable now, but will improve over the next several years. An outrageously good wine that I could drink all night long. Still great two days later from a previously opened bottle. This one will bring you to your knees. 98*



2012 Sea Smoke Southing Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir

14.58% alc., pH 3.42, TA 0.65, \$60 (1.5 ml \$125). The name refers to the south-facing hillside block of the estate vineyard. Grapes spent an evening in the cold room after picking and sorting and then 100% de-stemmed. Musts were cold soaked for 1 to 4 days, then inoculated with cultured yeasts. Manual punchdowns were carried out three times a day, with a total maceration time of 14 to 18 days. Free-run juice was transferred to tank for settling. Pressing was carried out at very low pressure. After settling, both free-run and press wines were racked to 55% new French oak barrels for 16 months aging. · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Gorgeous nose featuring spiced berries, violets, sous-bois and a hint of vanilla. The flamboyantly flavored core of black raspberry and plum is accented with spice and an undertone of earthy flora. Amazing fruit flavor, yet angelic, with a very soft and seamless demeanor, with oak adding complimentary seasoning. The fine-grain tannins are beautifully integrated and the typically bright Sta. Rita Hills acidity adds vibrancy. The finish is long and pleasing, filled with spicy plum goodness. This wine demands your attention from the get-go. Still stunning the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, when I drained the bottle. 97*



2013 Siduri Pisoni Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir

14.9% alc., 450 cases, \$60, screwcap. High yields but many berries in each cluster created an ideal situation. Grapes were picked over a month. A good percentage of whole clusters were used in the fermentation as the clusters had very ripe stems. 18 barrels (34% of the lot) were selected for this wine which includes barrels from the Big Block, Hermanos, and Tina's sections of the vineyard. · *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Typical Pisoni with a rich load of purple and black berry fruits that balance the wine's broad shoulders of tannins. The boldest wine in the Siduri lineup with a remarkable palate-staining, grand cru finish. The penetrating energy of the wine is striking. When I left a re-corked bottle for 3 days and re-tasted it, I was astonished by its brilliance. The tannins had thoroughly melded and the wine was all velvet, highly flavorful, and I experienced stars. This vineyard is truly the source of one of California's greatest Pinot Noirs.* 96



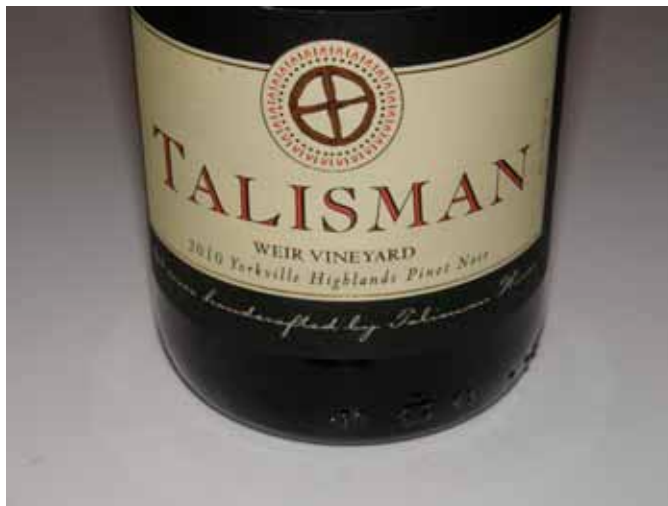
2011 Soliste Nouveau Monde Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

12.9% alc., 79 cases, \$75. MonoClone® Pommard from El Coro Vineyard at Keller Estate. · *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Wonderful perfume of red berries, red cherries, baking spice and sandalwood. In the mouth, this wine makes you sit up and take notice. Delicious mix of fresh, vibrant wild cherry, raspberry and red plum fruits with a touch of exotic spice in the background. Seamless and caressing with supple tannins. Lighter in weight but highly flavorful with a very long and charming spiced-cherry finish. Currently in a state of near perfection.* 96



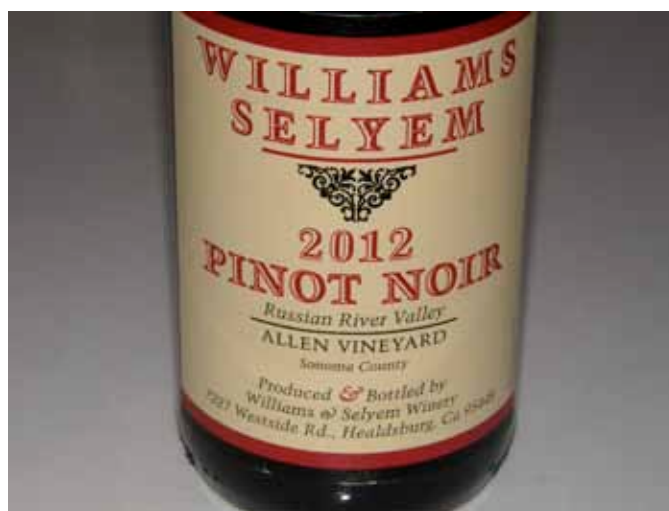
2010 Talisman Weir Vineyard Yorkville Highlands Pinot Noir

14.5% alc., 243 cases, \$65. Released October 2013. · A unique site with very cold night time temperatures and gravelly, well-drained soils. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Shy, but pleasing aromas of cherry, raspberry, blueberry and dark chocolate. Charming essence of sweet, dark red cherries and berries with a hint of lovable spice on the palate. Seamless with integrated tannins and a long, intensely fruited finish. This wine just speaks class. Everything you like in Pinot Noir from a very special vineyard. 96*



2012 Williams Selyem Allen Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., \$82. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The knockout nose is orgasmic, featuring spicy black cherry, berry wonderland and dark chocolate aromas. Soft, smooth and polished on the palate, the dark red cherries and berries attack with intent, and the epic flavor circus finishes with a grand cru level of bombastic cherry goodness. The texture is very seductive and the fruit is vibrant and pure. Superlatives don't do this spectacular wine justice. 96*



2014 California Pinot Noir Second Team All-Americans

2011 Black Kite Cellars River Turn Anderson Valley Pinot Noir

14.3% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.55, 148 cases, \$55. Aged 11 months in 66% new French oak barrels. · *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Be sure you are sitting down when you taste this charmer. The aromas leap out of the glass with purpose, offering scents of black cherry, black raspberry, Asian 5-spice and a hint of oak. The most sappy and forward of the three 2011 Pinots tasted here. Flat-out delicious with layers of flavor including black cherry liquor, black raspberry jam, and Hoison sauce. The fine-grain tannins are svelte, the balancing acidity is spot on, and the finish is filled with sweet-scented and saucy fruit. The finish is even more intense and persistence the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Log on to deliciouspinot.com for a good time.* 94

2012 Castalia Rochioli Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

14.5% alc., \$53. Another in a long string of impressive wines by Terry Bering, the long time cellar master at Rochioli Vineyards. · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A beautifully composed wine with enticing aromas of Bing cherry and spice echoed on the palate with added notes of blackberry, cola and loamy earth. Well-structured, but not imposing tannins, generous, layered concentration and an endlessly long finish. Still very young (Castalia Pinot Noirs typically need a year in bottle for full expression), but a quintessential Russian River Valley Pinot Noir.* 94

2012 Dutton-Goldfield Angel Camp Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir

13.5% alc., pH 3.66, TA 0.59, 306 cases, \$58. This vineyard is owned by Dan Goldfield's good friend Brian Zalaznick, who planted this 11.5-acre vineyard in memory of his brother and family. It is located west of Philo on a knoll above the Navarro River, overlooking the valley. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, co-fermentation of clones (Pommard, "828," and 667), 50% of press wine added back to enhance aromatics, aged 11 months in 50% new French oak barrels. · *Moderately dark reddish purple robe in the glass. This is one of those wines that you know is special from the get-go. Enormous aromas of black raspberry, black cherry, spice and sweet oak. Medium to full bodied and lush, it is crammed with zesty black cherry and black raspberry fruit with an undertone of cola, Asian 5-spice and dark chocolate. The tannins are modest and fine-grained, the lip-smacking acidity adds juiciness, and the supple finish is remarkably long and focused. The wine holds up beautifully after an hour in the glass. Like biting into a just picked, perfectly ripe black raspberry. An absolute knockout!* 94

2012 Kosta-Browne 4-Barrel California Pinot Noir

14.8% alc., 98 cases, \$84. · *Darkest wine in the 2012 lineup. The aromas are clean, pure and elevating, featuring notes of ripe cherry, raspberry and blueberry with a hint of nutmeg. My notes say, "Wow!" Delicious array of perfectly ripened Bing cherry, raspberry and olliberry fruit with riffs of oak-driven mocha and tea. Very suave in the mouth with impeccable balance and a long, multifaceted finish. This wine is always special. In Pinot veritas.* 95.

2012 Littorai Platt Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

13.5% alc., \$65. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Vivid aromas of alpine strawberry, raspberry coulis, briar and vanillin oak. Delicious fruit charge featuring raspberry, strawberry and cherry with*

stylish spice. Crisp and clean with modest tannins and a cherry and raspberry fueled finish of notable length and vibrancy. Still young and will take on more complexity with aging. Even better later in the day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. You will like this one. 94

2012 Lynmar Estate Old Vines Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

14.3% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.60, 301 cases, \$70. SF. Swan selection from a 1971-1972 planting of 2+ acres. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. I loved this wine! Enticing aromas of cherry, raspberry, spice and cola lead to a full-bodied entourage of fruit flavors including black cherry, dark berry, plum, cola and rhubarb. Layers of pleasure with nuances showing up with each sip. The tannins are still a little firm and grippy in this young wine which will benefit from cellaring. The finish is spectacular, with a velvety array of fruits fanning out in peacock fashion. A glorious old vine offering. 94-95*

2012 Rocking K Vineyard Single Vineyard Los Carneros Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., \$55. 50% whole cluster. Aged in 40% new French oak. · *Medium reddish-purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherries, spice, s'mores and espresso. Brilliant Bing cherry flavor with a delicious finishing kick of fruit. Plenty of cola and oak-driven notes are evident. The tannins are suave and the mouth feel is dreamy. Could turn out to be the best and most age worthy of the three vintages sampled here. Tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine showed more whole cluster driven spice and much better integration of oak. Yummy. 95*

2012 Sandhi Sanford & Benedict Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir

13.5% alc., \$65. Sourced from the original 1971 plantings at Sanford & Benedict Vineyard. · *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Very engaging nose that is whole cluster inspired with aromas of rose petal, spicy cola, cherry and spiced pear. Soft and silky on the palate with succulent flavors of red cherry and red berries with a hint of dried leaf and rose water in the background. More brightness and more savory than the Rinconada bottling. Plenty of bones for aging, with a nice interplay of juicy acidity and suede tannins on the finish. A sommelier's wine built for food. Considerable better and more expressive the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with plenty of spice, cola and fruit flavors dancing on the palate. 94*

2012 Sanglier Cellars Old Camp Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

14.7% alc., pH 3.71, TA 0.56, 49 cases, \$45. The vineyard is just above the Russian River on the eastern ridge and enjoys slightly more brilliant sunshine than the valley below, but still has exposure to the Pacific fog that creeps into the Valley each summer night. Pommard and 667 clones. Aged in French oak. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is alive with scents of Bing cherries, cola and cinnamon spice. An evocative wine with a plush attack of black cherry and black raspberry fruits that alert the palate. Nicely spiced and showing a hint of oak, this wine delivers a generous charge of cherries jubilee on the expansive finish. Highly flavorful, even hedonistic, but not overweighted or sweet. 94.*

2012 Wayfarer "Mother Rock" Fort Ross-Seaview Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

14.6% alc., pH 3.56, TA 0.59, 400 cases, \$N/A. Clone 37 (Mount Eden) and Dijon 777 co-fermented. 24% whole cluster fermentation. Aged 15 months in 56% new French oak. This wine is named for Wayfarer's sandstone substrate. · *Moderately deep reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is highly expressive, picking up interest and intensity over time in the glass. Aromas of fresh raspberries, cherries and strawberries are glass filling, accented with very subtle spice and vanilla. The mid palate attack is rich and satisfying with mid weight flavors of red berries and plum carrying the charge through a generous finish. This wine has very complimentary integration of oak, the balance is spot on, and the texture is soft and luxurious. I was completely seduced by the mouthfeel which sets this wine apart from all the Wayfarer wines in this tasting. Still delightful the next day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 94*

2012 Woodenhead Wiley Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir

14.5% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.55, 296 cases, \$60. 28-year-old vines (Pommard 5 and Romanee-Conti 37). Unfined and unfiltered. · This wine really caught my attention at the Grand Tasting at the Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Definitely some pennyroyal on the nose with added scents of blackberries, tea, and spice. Very dark fruited, this wine is flush with black raspberry, black cherry and black tea notes that envelope the palate. The dreamy tannins offer a fine-grain texture and the oak hits all the right notes. This wine has the stuffing to age beautifully, but is very hard to resist now. A magnificent wine from one of Anderson Valley's most esteemed vineyards.* **94**

2014 California Pinot Noir Honorable Mention All-Americans

All these wines received the Pinot Geek designation and a score of 94 or more in 2014. Wines designated by ** received both the Pinot Geek icon (a score of 94 or more) and the Pinot Value icon (quality at a value price).

Anderson Valley

2012 Ferrari-Carano Middleridge Ranch Anderson Valley Pinot Noir
2011 Goldeneye Ten Degrees Estate Grown Anderson Valley Pinot Noir
2012 LIOCO Klindt Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir
2012 Navarro Deep End Blend Anderson Valley Pinot Noir
2012 Waits-Mast Deer Meadows Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir
2012 Williams Selyem Burt Williams Morning Dew Ranch Anderson Valley Pinot Noir

Mendocino Ridge

2012 Ferrari-Carano Sky High Vineyard Mendocino Ridge Pinot Noir

Yorkville Highlands

2012 Brooks Note Weir Vineyard Yorkville Highlands Pinot Noir
2012 Williams Selyem Weir Vineyard Yorkville Highlands Pinot Noir

Sonoma County

2012 Cosa Obra Sonoma County Pinot Noir**
2012 Kosta Browne Cohn Vineyard Sonoma County Pinot Noir

Sonoma Coast

2012 Charles Heintz Vineyards Heintz Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 Dutton-Goldfield McDougall Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 Fulcrum Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2011 Furthermore Nevina's Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 Gundlach Bundschu Heritage Selection Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2011 Hirsch Vineyards East Ridge Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 Joseph Phelps Freestone Vineyards Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2011 LaRue Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 LaRue Emmaline Ann Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 Littorai B.A. Theiriote Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2004 Littorai Hirsch Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2011 Peter Michael Le Caprice Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 Pfendler Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 Rivers-Marie Summa Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 Rivers-Marie Kanzler Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 Siduri Pratt-Sexton Road Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 Sojourn Sangiacomo Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 Sojourn Campbell Ranch Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 Soliste L'Ambroisie Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 Soliste Nouveau Monde Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir
2012 Wayfarer "The Traveler" Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

Russian River Valley

2011 Arista Two Birds Estate Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
2012 Bacigalupi Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
2012 Davis Family Vineyards Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

2012 Failla Keefer Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
2012 Gary Farrell Hallberg Vineyard 777 Oak Tank Fermented Whole Cluster Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
2012 Gary Farrell Rochioli-Allen Vineyards Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
2012 George Buena Terra Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
2011 Joseph Jewell Hallberg Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
2012 Lynmar Estate Quail Hill Vineyard Bliss Block Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
2012 Lynmar Estate Five Sisters Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
2012 Martin Ray Reserve Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
2012 Siduri Keefer Ranch Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
2012 Tessier Saralee's Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
2010 Williams Selyem Williams Selyem Estate Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
2011 Williams Selyem Block 10 - Mass Selection Williams Selyem Estate Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

Sonoma Mountain

2012 Roadhouse Winery Dark Purple Label Sonoma Mountain Pinot Noir

Carneros

2010 Talisman Aadastra Vineyard Los Carneros Pinot Noir
2010 Talisman Wildcat Vineyard Los Carneros Pinot Noir

Santa Cruz Mountains

2009 Clos de la Tech Domaine Valeta Sunny Slope Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir
2009 Clos de la Tech Domaine Du Docteur Rodgers Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir
2012 Waxwing Lester Family Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir

Santa Lucia Highlands

2011 Bernardus Soberanes Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir
2011 Bernardus Rosella's Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir
2012 McIntyre Vineyards 25th Anniversary Edition Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir**

Chalone

2012 Fulcrum Brousseau Vineyard Chalone Pinot Noir

Arroyo Grande

2012 Laetitia Les Galets Arroyo Grande Pinot Noir
2012 Laetitia Whole Cluster Arroyo Grande Pinot Noir

San Luis Obispo County

2012 Sinor-LaValle Anniversary Cuvée San Luis Obispo County Pinot Noir

Sta. Rita Hills

2011 Hilliard Bruce Sky Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir
2012 Longoria Fe Ciega Vineyard Block M Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir
2012 Siduri Cargasacchi Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir
2012 Siduri John Sebastiano Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir

2014 California Value Priced Pinot Noir First Team All-Americans

Wines marked by ** received both the Pinot Geek icon (a score of 94 or more) and the Pinot Value icon (quality at a value price) - a rare combination.



2013 Brooks Note Marin County Pinot Noir (92 - \$36)

2012 Cos Obra Sonoma County Pinot Noir (94 - \$27)**

2012 E16 Upper Bench Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir (92 - \$35)

2012 Elke Donnelly Creek Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (91 - \$33)

2012 Ernest Vineyards The Engineer Romanini Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (92 - \$36)

2012 Gloria Ferrer Carneros Pinot Noir (91 - \$27)

2012 Martin Ray Reserve Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (94 - \$35)**

2012 McIntyre Vineyards Estate 25th Anniversary Edition Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir (94 - \$36)**

2012 Navarro Méthode Á L'Ancienne Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (92 - \$29)

2012 Truchard Vineyards Carneros Napa Valley Pinot Noir (92 - \$35)

2012 Wait Cellars Devoto Garden Vineyard Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (92 - \$32)

2012 Windsor Oaks Vineyards Reserve Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (92 - \$34)

2014 California Value Priced Honorable Mention All-Americans

California

2013 Tessier Winery After Hours California Pinot Noir (89 - \$30)

North Coast

2012 The Winery SF North Coast Pinot Noir (89 - \$30)

Anderson Valley

2012 Briceland Vineyards Wiley Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (89 - \$32)

2011 Champ de Rêves Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (89 - \$30)

2012 Ferrari-Carano Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (89 - \$34)

2012 Greenwood Ridge Vineyards Mendocino Ridge Pinot Noir (90 - \$30)

2012 Knez Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (89 - \$29)

2012 Navarro Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (90 - \$19.50)

Mendocino Ridge

2012 Drew Gatekeepers Mendocino Ridge Pinot Noir (90 - \$32)

Sonoma County

2012 E16 E16 Selection Sonoma County Pinot Noir (89 - \$35)

Sonoma Coast

2012 Alma Fria Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (91 - \$35)

2012 Anaba Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (89 - \$34)

2012 Bailiwick Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (89 - \$28)

2012 Bailiwick Sangiacomo Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (92 - \$38)

2012 Gundlach Bundschu Estate Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (92 - \$37)

2012 Martin Ray Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (92 - \$35)

2012 Pali Wine Co. "Riviera" Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (89 - \$21)

2013 Picayune Cellars Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (90 - \$29)

2011 Wild Ridge Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (91 - \$33)

Russian River Valley

2011 Ancient Oak Cellars Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (89 - \$28)

2012 Balverne Estate Grown Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (89 - \$30)

2011 Pellegrini Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (90 - \$30)

2012 Peter Paul Wines Gravenstein Highway Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (90 - \$34)

2012 Siduri Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (89 - \$32)

2012 Windsor Oaks Vineyards Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (90 - \$30)

Carneros

2011 Gloria Ferrer Carneros Pinot Noir (89 - \$27)

2012 Owl Ridge Carneros Pinot Noir (89 - \$24)

2012 Tin Barn Vineyards Ricci Vineyard Carneros Pinot Noir (90 - \$36)

Marin County

2012 Bailiwick Borderline Marin County Pinot Noir (90 - \$28)

Santa Cruz Mountains

- 2012 Sante Arcangeli Family Wines Split Rail Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir (90 - \$36)**
- 2010 McHenry Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir (89 - \$25)**
- 2012 Ser Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir (89 - \$33)**
- 2012 Windy Oaks Terra Narro Schultze Family Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir (89 - \$29)**

Santa Lucia Highlands

- 2012 J. Lohr Highlands Bench Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir (89 - \$25)**
- 2012 Manzoni Home Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir (89 - \$35)**
- 2012 McIntyre Vineyards Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir (90 - \$32)**
- 2012 Siduri Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir (90 - \$32)**

Arroyo Grande Valley

- 2012 Laetitia Estate Arroyo Grande Valley Pinot Noir (89 - \$25)**

Edna Valley

- 2011 Evening Land Spanish Springs Vineyard Edna Valley Pinot Noir (90 - \$20)**

Santa Barbara County

- 2012 Carr Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir (90 - \$35)**
- 2011 Hartley Ostini Hitching Post Highliner Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir (89 - \$34)**

Sta. Rita Hills

- 2011 Lea Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir (89 - \$32)**
- 2012 Melville Estate Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir (90 - \$36)**
- 2012 Siduri Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir (89-90 - \$32)**

2014 Oregon Pinot Noir First Team All-Americans

2012 Bergström Gregory Ranch Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., \$47.50. From an estate-farmed vineyard owned by Wine Club members Dr. Kenton and Cindy Gregory. The vineyard was planted in 2007 to Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. 21 acres with 15 different clonal blocks on a steep hillside. Soils are sandstone-based marine. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Highly aromatic and alluring with bright aromas of black cherries, black raspberries, plum reduction sauce and spice. Exuberant and luscious on the palate with waves of black cherry, boysenberry and black raspberry fruits accented with spice. Velvety in texture with suave tannins and beautifully integrated oak. Highly pleasurable, this wine shows up the ripe, forward fruit of Oregon's 2012 vintage. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was even more aromatic and flavorful. Wow! 95*



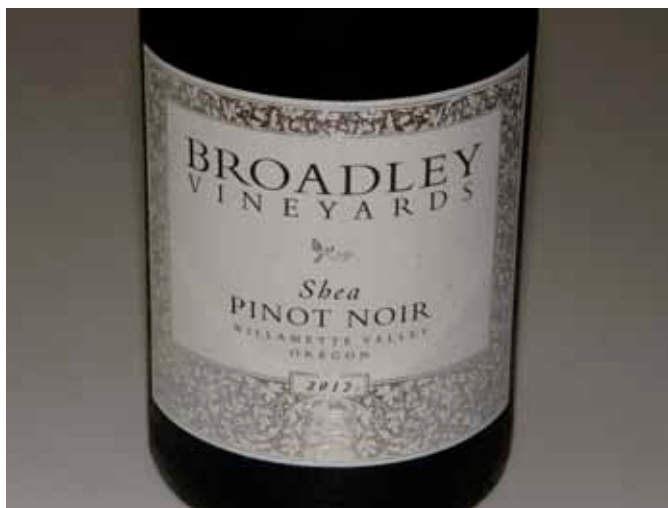
2012 Big Table Farm Pelos-Sandberg Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., 224 cases, \$48. 30% whole cluster. Unfined and unfiltered. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. A glorious nose offers upbeat aromas of black raspberry, cherry, blueberry, spice, and espresso. This wine has more oak presence than I like initially, but the fruit intensity can take it, and the wine sheds its oak the longer it sits in the glass. Vibrant fruit flavors of well-ripened black raspberry and black cherry, nicely spiced. Similar to the Willamette Valley wine in flavor profile but more intensity, a longer finish, and a more seductively plush mouth feel. This wine grows on you, the longer you spend with it. Easily a ten year wine. 94*



2012 Broadley Vineyards Shea Vineyard Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.1% alc. 250 cases, \$50 (sold out at winery). Clones 777 and Wädenswil from blocks 11 and 19. 100% de-stemmed, wild yeast fermentation in 3-ton open-top Taransaud wood fermenter for 14-21 days. Aged 12 months in 30% new and 70% neutral Francois Frères barrels. · *Superlatives can't do this wine justice. Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Alluring aromas of black cherry, plum and exotic spice. Intense and mouth filling with layers of amazingly pure red and purple fruits, well spiced, and matched with fine, mouth coating tannins. Sturdy on the palate, yet bright, succulent and juicy. The haunting finish is remarkably long, returning with waves of pleasure. Even better when tasted several hours later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle indicating long-term potential. Heaven sent. 95*



2012 Cristom Eileen Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.0% alc., \$58. Typically the most precocious of the four estate vineyard wines and often the first wine released to the market. This vineyard extends to the crest of the property exposing the vines to the last rays of sun and the first cooling breezes from the Pacific Ocean. Volcanic soils. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The seductive scents of dark berries, black cherries, rose petal and cardamon spice really get the juices flowing. It is challenging to adequately describe this nose since the aromas saturate the olfactory senses with so much whole cluster goodness. "Wow" might be the best descriptor. On entry, this wine delivers a charge of black raspberry fruit and exotic spices that really brings the palate to alert. This is a stunning wine with a silky texture, healthy young tannins, and a peacock finish that hangs on for at least a minute. There is some umami at work in this wine as well. Scary to think that this wine will be even better with more bottle age. 96-97*



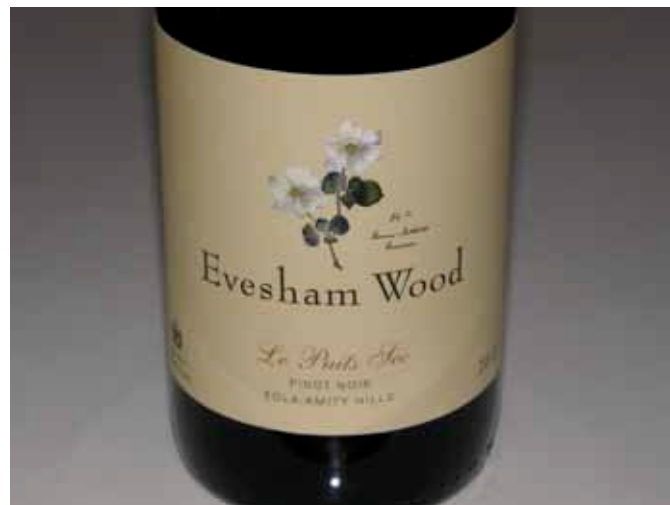
2011 De Ponte Cellars Baldwin Family Reserve Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.4% alc., \$70. A winemaker selection of full-bodied and complex barrels in the cellar. Limited production. · Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose envelopes your senses with aromas of red cherry, raspberry and exotic spices that reveal themselves gradually in the glass over time. Superlatives can hardly do justice to this wine which is extraordinary in every way. It is polished, balanced, elegant and hi-collared, with a delicious core of vivid cherry, raspberry and spice flavors, a caressing texture, and remarkable persistence on the finish. This wine seduces with charm, not power. A connoisseur's wine that will age beautifully. **96**



2012 Evesham Wood La Grive Bleue Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.0% alc., \$25. This wine pays homage to the Western Bluebird, preservation of whose habitat was a prime motivation for the winery's decision to farm the estate Le Puits Sec Vineyard organically. Non-irrigated vines. Unfiltered. · Moderately light reddish purple hue in the glass. Intoxicating aromas of fresh cherry pie and rose petals. Delicious core of red cherry, red raspberry fruit flavors accented with notes of spice and floral goodness. Soft, silky and suave on the palate with supple tannins and appealing harmony. Amazing phenolic ripeness and flavor at this low ABV. Very special. **94**



2012 Guillén Family Adrian Reserve Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.4% alc., 23 cases, \$60. Sourced from Vista Hills Vineyard Block F planted in 2005 with Dijon 667. Jory soils. High percentage of whole cluster fermentation. 4-day cold soak, 22 days skin contact, basket pressed, aged 17 months sur lie in one new French oak barrel. Racked twice and filtered. Bottled very recently. · Moderately dark reddish purple hue in the glass. The nose is reticent, giving up reluctantly some hints of darker fruits, spice and a subtle oak. Rich and sappy, with a plethora of fruit flavors including black raspberry, plum, cassis and spice, supported by broad-shouldered, yet refined tannins. The wine has a caressing mouthfeel, and a finish of startling length. I think Grand Cru entered my mind while tasting this beauty. Still very young, but the potential is obvious. **94-95**



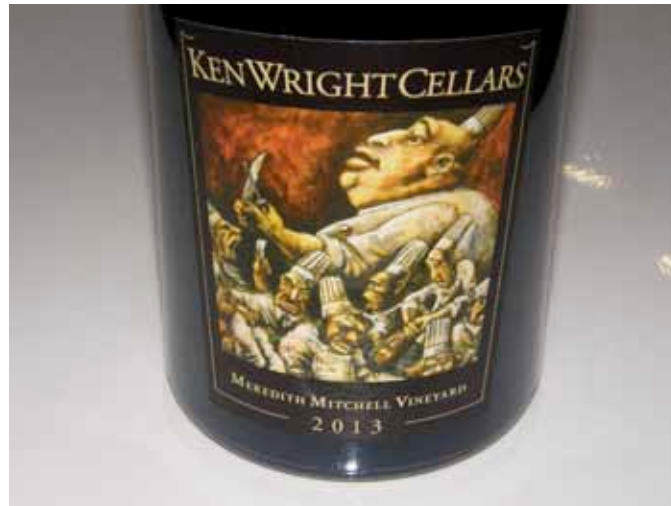
2012 Haden Fig Bjornson Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.5% alc., 123 cases, \$30. 5 favorite barrels. · Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Interesting aromatics featuring scents of ripe cherry, fig (seems appropriate) and bourbon. Extra-delicious core of black cherry and black raspberry fruit, nicely spiced with an additional peppery note. Admirable harmony, and a long, memorable finish that makes the knees weak. This is a wine that tugs at your emotions and defies adequate description. One of the best values in Oregon Pinot Noir. **94**



2013 Ken Wright Cellars Meredith Mitchell Vineyard McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

12.5% alc., \$50. This vineyard is planted to own-rooted Pommard first established in 1988. Soil is Yamhill - shallow silty loam over basaltic bedrock. The vineyard is owned and managed by Susan Meredith and Franck Mitchell. · *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Scents of cherry, forest floor and oak char are somewhat shy, but the fruit explodes on the palate. Rich raspberry and cherry flavor that attacks the mid palate with a vengeance. Accents of baking spice, earth and conifer add interest. Uncommon fruit energy that fuels an intensely flavorful finish. Rare to find a wine with such palate saturating fruit. The nose has not arrived, so give this wine at least a year in bottle. 93-95*



2012 Owen Roe The Kilmore Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., \$42. Winemaker David O'Reilly is one of the few Irish-born winemakers in the United States. This wine is named after the Kilmore Doorway which is displayed on the label in a photo. This Romanesque doorway was a sculpted entrance to the ancient Trinity Island Abbey in County Cavan, Ireland. Here the great patriot Owen Roe O'Neill sought solace during his quest for Irish independence. Pommard, Wädenswil and Dijon clones from vineyards in the Yamhill-Carlton District. · *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose offers an array of enticing aromas including raspberry, dried cherry, sassafras, leather saddle and sandalwood. Modest in weight, but highly flavorful, the wine offers notes of black cherry, black raspberry, spice, dark chocolate and coffee. Very gracious and easy to drink now, this beauty has the balance and tannic backbone to age effortlessly in the cellar for 5 to 10 years. I loved the 2010 vintage of this wine, and this vintage is a hair better. 95*



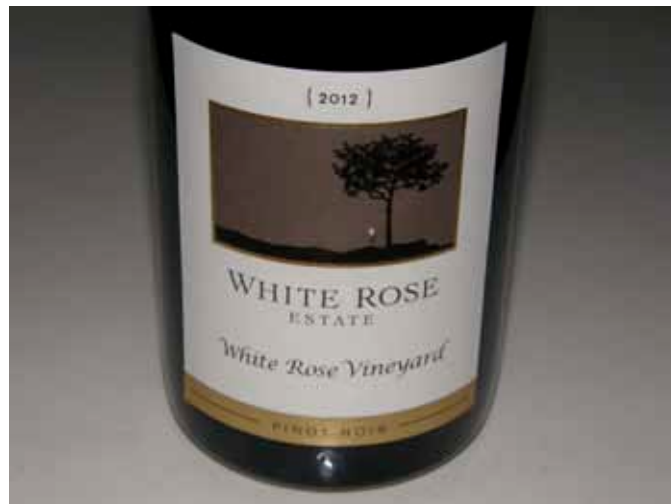
2011 Seven of Hearts Very Special Reserve Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.0% alc., pH 3.57, TA 0.59, 126 cases, \$75. This wine is only made in very special vintages. From Luminous Hills, Armstrong, Lia's and Durant vineyards. 33% whole cluster fermented. Aged in 23% new French oak. Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Extroverted nose offering aromas of wild berries and exotic spices. Forceful and assertive on the palate, yet elegant, with a perfectly ripened core of berry fruit still mildly compressed by tannins. Similar to the Special Reserve, but more aloof at this stage. An ethereal wine that oozes pinotosity. **95**



2012 White Rose Estate White Rose Vineyard Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

12.9% alc., pH 3.77, 235 cases, \$125. Low yields of 0.5 tons per acre due to poor set. Self-rooted Pommard clone. 6-day cold soak, 100% whole cluster fermentation, 20 to 21-day skin contact, aged 16 months in 10% new French oak barrels. Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. This is a very elegant and refined wine with considerable freshness. The aromas of cherry, raspberry, wilted rose, and spice jump from the glass. The core of cherry, raspberry and pomegranate fruits is complimented by a vein of spice and leaf in the background. The very slight herbaceous note adds a bit of savoriness and is not at all off putting to me. This wine has more polished tannins than the Winemaker's Cuvée and slightly brighter tension. The peacock finish is incredibly long and satisfying. This wine typifies the neo-classical objective of juiciness and freshness with enough tannic backbone to age and a minimum of oak intrusion to allow the fruit to clearly speak. **95-96**



2014 Oregon Pinot Noir Second Team All-Americans

2012 Anam Cara Nicholas Vineyard Reserve Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.2% alc., 420 cases, \$46. 30% Pommard, 30% 777, 20% 115, 10% 114 and 10% 667. Aged in 37% new and 29% once-filled French oak. · *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose invigorates with effusive aromas of fresh cherries, spice and dark red rose petals. Bright and elegant on the palate, with a pleasing core of cherry fruit accented with hints of brown spice and white chocolate. The suave tannins are nicely integrated, the texture is silky, and the finish is clean and refreshing.* **94**

2010 Anne Amie L'Iris Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.3% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.61, 230 cases, \$60. Released May 2014. 74.2% Twelve Oaks Estate, 15.8% Rainbow Ridge and 10% Anne Amie Estate. Clones are Pommard 4, 667, 777, 114, 113, 115, and Wädenswil. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, free-run juice was racked into French oak barrels where the wine completed malolactic fermentation. Aged 18 months in 20.5% new, 35% 1-year, and 44.5% neutral French oak and 2-3 years in bottle. · *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Vibrant aromas of cherry, red berry, sandalwood and spice lead to an elegantly styled wine that charms you with flavors of red cherries and berries, blueberries, savory herbs, spice and a compliment of oak-driven notes. The tannins are evident but not intrusive and indicate age ability, and the finish is a veritable spice bomb. Tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was flat-out great.* **93-94**

2012 Beckham Estate Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir**

13.9% alc., 225 cases, \$30. Contains all four clones from the estate vineyard. 100% de-stemmed and whole berry fermented. Aged 15 months in 40% new French oak. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The vibrant nose picks up intensity and nuance over time in the glass, offering a rainbow of aromas including black cherry, ripe strawberry, black raspberry, spice and rose. Delicious well-sustained attack of black cherry fruit accented with clove and cola, carrying over to a magnificent finish of impressive fruit concentration. Very smooth in the mouth with the structure to age many years. This wine has a racy personality.* **94**

2012 Big Table Farm Resonance Vineyard Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.7% alc., 326 cases, \$48. Last vintage from this vineyard which was sold to Burgundy producer Louis Jadot in 2013. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is stunning, with an array of nuanced scents including plum, blackberry, black raspberry, sous-bois, exotic spices and bark. Mid weight plus core of well-ripened purple and black fruits, nicely spiced with well-integrated oak. Very fruity, slightly sweet and juicy, with a firm tannic backbone. Bigger, riper and sappier in this vintage as one would expect from a site in a warmer vintage. Evolves beautifully over time in the glass and is much better later in the day, offering a remarkably long grand cru finish. A memorable swan song.* **94**

2012 Chapter 24 Fire + Flood The Flood Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.3% alc., \$60. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Penetrating aromas of darker stone and berry fruits flow from the glass and hold up over time. Full-bodied and boisterous flavors of Bing cherries, boysenberries and cassis caress the palate and persist with uncommon intensity on the very long finish. The*

wine still has an oak sheen which will integrate over time in the cellar. The soft texture is particularly appealing. A very special wine. **94**.

2012 de Lancellotti Famiglia Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.8% alc., 75 cases, \$35. A blend of estate fruit and sourced fruit all farmed Biodynamic. This wine is the least expensive in the de Lancellotti lineup, but I thought it was terrific. · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Delicate aromas of cherry, spice and oak vanillin. Very smooth and likable on the palate, with an impressively intense mid palate attack of dark red cherry and black raspberry flavors with a compliment of cinnamon spice and oak in the background. Very crisp with a generous and persistent cherry-driven finish that is mouth watering. An impressive offering that was still pumping out the pleasure the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. No need to wait on this beauty.* **94**

2012 Kramer Vineyards Cardiac Hill Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.5% alc., pH 3.47, TA 0.64, 100 cases, \$42. Crafted from LIVE-certified grapes. Sourced from the steepest hillside vines on the estate vineyard. Clones are Pommard and Dijon 11. Harvest Brix 23.3°. Willakenzie soil with a high clay content which stresses the vines and leads to small yields. 100% de-stemmed. 5-day cold soak, pumped over and punched down twice daily until dry, then pressed. Aged 17 months in 25% new French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. I am crazy about this nose which features aromas of black cherries, complex floral notes, complimentary spice and a hint of smoky oak. On the palate, the mid weight flavors of black cherry, ripe strawberry, raspberry and spice are enticing. The bright acidity gives the vibrant apple fruit flavor a lift. There are plenty of tannins to go the distance. A delightful wine with charm and sophistication.* **94**

2012 Lenné Estate Karen's Pommard Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., 150 cases, \$55. The best barrels from the Pommard block. Named after Steve Lutz's spouse, Karen. · *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Very complex nose offering an array of pleasurable aromas including black cherry, cola, mocha, spice, rose petal, and sweet oak. The discreetly concentrated core of perfectly ripened black cherries is complimented by a riff of cola and spice. The peacock finish is the most intense and lengthy of the 2012 Lenné wines.* **94**

2011 Phelps Creek Vineyards Cuvée Alexandrine Columbia Gorge Pinot Noir

13.9% alc., \$50. Fourth generation Burgundian winemaker Alexandrine Roy joins Phelps Creek in Hood River, Oregon, each fall after placing her Gevrey-Chambertain wines in barrel. This wine is made from a selection of estate fruit. · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Elusive aromas upon opening that emerge over time in the glass to reveal scents of cherry, raspberry and vanilla. Intensely flavored on the mid palate and finish exhibiting ripe cherry and raspberry fruits with a little dash of herbs and earth. A striking wine that has the tannins in the forefront at this young age, but is uniquely interesting. The finish is particularly noteworthy for its persistence and charm. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. This wine has obvious French breeding and will require patience. Over time, there will be plenty to discover.* **93-94**

2012 Scott Paul Audrey Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.5% alc., \$83. Magnums too (\$175). Sourced from special old vine blocks of Maresh Vineyard. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color that glows in the glass. Spectacular aromas of raspberry, dark cherry and spice that pick up intensity over time in the glass. Mid to full-bodied core of juicy black cherry and black raspberry flavors that are vivid and uplifting. The finish is intense with flavors fanning out in unabashed generosity. This wine has that old vine nuance that emotes. Big and curvy in this vintage, this normally elegant bottling still retains some of that seductiveness. More restrained at this stage than the Le Paulée, but offers more upside long term. A wine to contemplate.* **94**

2012 Van Duzer Estate Alchemy Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.5% alc., pH 3.58, TA 0.60, 70 cases, \$65. A barrel selection of wines with the most complex and intense fruit characteristics. 66% Van Duzer Vineyards (Flagpole and Homestead Blocks) and 33% Saffron Fields Vineyards. 50% Pommard, 30% 114, 20% 115. Aged in 33% new French oak barrels. · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Uplifting aromas of Bing cherry, alpine strawberry, baking spice and sandalwood. Mid to full-bodied sweet and sappy core of black cherry, black raspberry and black plum fruits accented with the right touch of oak. An impressive offering with impeccable balance that will reward cellaring.* **94**

2012 WildAire Shea Vineyard Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.2% alc., pH 3.72, TA 0.55, 72 cases, \$45. Harvest Brix 24.5°. 100% Wädenswil clone from Block 25. 100% de-stemmed, 7-day cold soak, inoculated fermentation. Aged 10 months in 33% new French Oak barrels. · *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Very engaging aromas of dark cherry pie glaze, spice, violets and smoky oak. Delicious core of nicely ripened black cherry fruit with a hint of mocha and spice. The fruit really attracts attention as it is vivid and juicy. There is a good amount of fine-grain tannins for structural integrity and noticeably intense finishing presence. I am not usually a fan of single clone Wädenswil Pinot Noir, but this beauty bursts my bubble. A standout.* **94**

2014 Oregon Value Priced Pinot Noir First Team All-Americans

- 2012 Anam Cara Cellars Nicholas Estate Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** (93-94 - \$33)**
- 2012 Beckham Estate Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** (94 - \$30)**
- 2012 Broadley Vineyards Zenith Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (91 - \$30)**
- 2012 de Lancellotti Famiglia Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** (94 - \$35)**
- 2012 Evesham Wood Le Puits Sec Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (93 - \$33)**
- 2011 Guillén Family Dreamcatcher Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (92 - \$25)**
- 2012 Haden Fig Cancilla Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (93 - \$30)**
- 2012 Harper Voit Strandline Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (93 - \$35)**
- 2012 Luminous Hills Estate Grown Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (92-93 - \$35)**
- 2012 Seven of Hearts Durant Vineyard Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (92-93 - \$35)**
- 2012 Sharecropper's Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (91 - \$20)**
- 2012 Winter's Hill Estate Watershed Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (92 - \$25)**

2014 Oregon Value Priced Pinot Noir Honorable Mention All-Americans

- 2012 Beckham Estate Sophia's Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (91-92 - \$35)**
- 2012 Broadley Vineyards Estate Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (91 - \$28)**
- 2012 Carabella Plowbuster Oregon Pinot Noir (89 - \$20)**
- 2011 Elk Cove Mount Richmond Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (90 - \$34)**
- 2012 Evesham Wood Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (90 - \$19)**
- 2012 Evesham Wood Illahe Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (90 - \$27)**
- 2010 Guillién Family Dreamcatcher Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (90 - \$25)**
- 2012 J.K. Carriere Provocateur Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (91 - \$26)**
- 2012 Kramer Vineyards Estate Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (90 - \$24)**
- 2012 La Crema Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (90 - \$30)**
- 2012 Lenné Estate Le Nez Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (89 - \$30)**
- 2012 Panther Creek Winemaker's Cuvée Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (89 - \$30)**
- 2012 Purple Hands Barbon Wahl Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (89 - \$30)**
- 2012 Seven of Hearts Bjornson Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (90-91 - \$25)**
- 2012 Seven of Hearts Lia's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (90-91 - \$35)**
- 2012 Seven of Hearts Curmudgeon Cuvée Armstrong Vineyard Ribbon Ridge Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (91 - \$35)**
- 2012 Seven of Hearts Armstrong Vineyard Ribbon Ridge Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (89-90 - \$35)**
- 2010 Siltstone Guadalupe Vineyard Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (91 - \$32)**
- 2012 St. Innocent Temperance Hill Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (91 - \$35)**
- 2012 The Eyrie Vineyards Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (90 - \$30)**
- 2012 Westrey Justice Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (90 - \$33)**
- 2012 WildAire Reserve Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir (91 - \$35)**
- 2012 Willful Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (89 - \$35)**

2014 California Chardonnay All-Americans

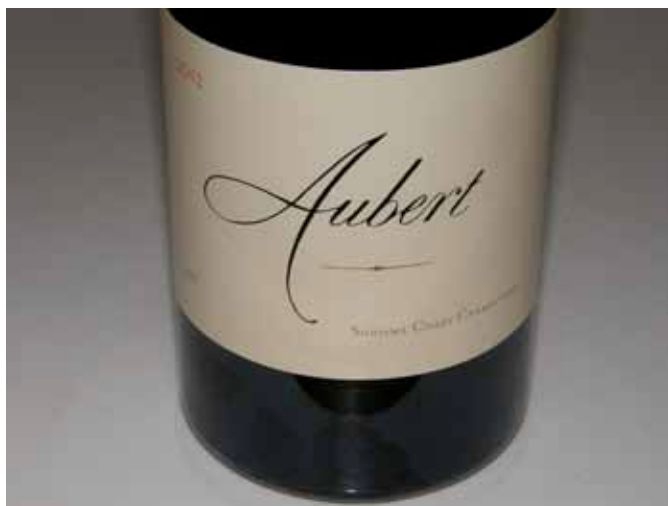
2012 Anaba Denmark Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay**

13.9% alc., pH 3.45, TA 0.59, 216 cases, \$34. This vineyard is in the southeastern foothills of the Sonoma Coast AVA. The soils are rich with minerals. Wentz clone. Harvest Brix 23.5°. Whole cluster pressed, cold settled for 2 days, 60% fermented in stainless vats, 40% in neutral French oak barrels. 40% of the wine went through malolactic fermentation. Aged sur lees for 11 months in 12% new French oak. · *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. This was a striking way in every way. Aromas of lemon curd, butter brickle, poached pear and apple draw you into the glass. Delicious flavors of citrus, Granny Smith apple, peach and pear with a slight buttery tone. Very harmonious and bright, with perfectly engaged acidity. There is some stony minerality in this wine for want of a better description. The finish is silky and pleasing with a lasting impression of lemon creme. This wine reminds me of a very fine Meursault.* **94**



2012 Aubert CIX Estate Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay

15.0% alc., 600 case, \$90. This vineyard is planted with the Reuling selection of Chardonnay in 2007. It is located adjacent Lauren Vineyard. · *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Wondrous aromas of apple, lemon, pineapple, stone, almond and steel displaying impressive intensity and penetrating quality over time in the glass. A remarkably flavorful wine with notes of lemon curd, baked apple, peach, spice, cashew butter, burnt caramel, nutty oak, and honey with moderate richness. Beautiful oak integration in an unctuous style that is still impeccably balanced. There is no sense of high alcohol in this wine. A distinguished wine offering a bold expression of California Chardonnay. This wine has the balance to last upwards of 10 years.* **95**



2012 Bluxome Street Winery Teac-Mor Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay

14.2% alc., 175 cases, \$38. · Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. This wine really sings with appealing aromas of lemon curd and apple and bright lemon flavor accented with notes of pear, peach, herbs and very subtle oak. Very clean and crisp, impressively balanced, and thoroughly enjoyable, even exceptional. **94**



2012 Charles Heintz Vineyards Heintz Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay

14.2% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.52, 200 cases, \$45. Clone 4 (Wente) on AXR1 planted in 1982. Barrel fermented, 11 months in barrel on lees with stirring 1 to 2 times per month only until malolactic fermentation complete. Aged in 35% new French oak barrels. · Light golden yellow color in the glass. A reference wine for California Chardonnay. High brow aromas of lemon, Granny Smith apple, marzipan and toast lead to flavors of lemon curd, honeyed nuts, toasty oak and a hint of tropical fruits. Polished and seductive with perfect harmony between California fruit hedonism and bright, mineral-driven acidity. Still invigorating the following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. **95**



2011 Failla Keefer Ranch Russian River Valley Chardonnay

14.1% alc., 425 cases, \$42. Very cool growing season. 25% of grapes were fermented in concrete egg vessels and 75% in 33% new French oak barrels. · *Pale yellow color and clear in the glass. Appealing aromas of pear, applesauce, pastry cream, toffee and vanilla wafer. Slightly creamy and plush on the palate with vivid flavors of poached pear, baked apple, finishing with a Carmel apple note and a charge of bright acidity. This wine has the apple by the tail.* **94**



2012 McIntyre Vineyards Estate 25th Anniversary Edition Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay

14.4% alc., pH 3.76, TA 0.58, 792 cases, \$28. Released December 2013. From a block of clone 76 planted in 2000. VSP trellis with cluster thinning. Harvest Brix 25.0° Brix. Whole cluster pressed, 20% whole cluster, fermented in new Siruge French oak barrels and aged in 33% new French oak barrels for 10 months. 100% MLF. · *Moderate straw color in the glass. Lovely aromas of lemon, tropical fruits, floral display and a hint of buttered popcorn. A Caliesque style of Chardonnay with plenty of showy fruit flavor including lemon, pear and pineapple. Seductively creamy on the palate with bright underlying acidity and a silky finish. I couldn't help returning to the glass to take another sip. A complete charmer at a very attractive price.* **94**



2012 Patz & Hall Hyde Vineyard Carneros Chardonnay

14.2% alc., 1,303 cases, \$60. Released October 2014. Hyde-Wente selection. 24th growing season working with this fruit. Whole cluster pressed. Indigenous fermentations, aged sur lie with weekly stirring, 100% malolactic fermentation in barrel. Aged in 50% new French oak barrels. Unfiltered. · Moderate straw color and clear in the glass. Lovely perfume of fresh lemon, white rose, and brioche. Hi-tone flavors of lemon, nectarine, apple, lemongrass and nutty oak working in harmony. Bright, with excellent grip and follow through on the crisp finish. A stylish wine with excellent breeding. **93**



2011 Peirson-Meyer Charles Heintz Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay

14.2% alc., \$55. · *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Aromas of lemon, pear and ripe pineapple lead to enjoyable flavors of lemon, baked pear and toffee. The balance is spot on, the texture is slightly creamy, and there is a good spark of acidity driving the refreshment. The finish is long with a pleasing honeyed lemon tone. The wine gets better over time in the glass becoming more aromatic with elevated flavor volume. Still great the next day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **94**



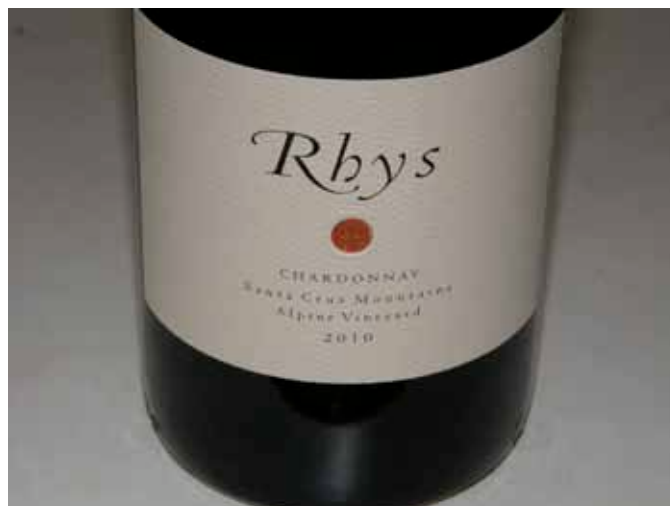
2012 Pfendler Sonoma Coast Chardonnay

14.2% alc., pH 3.58, TA 0.618, 300 cases, \$38. Clones 4 and Hyde-Wente. Brix at harvest 24° 100% barrel fermented and 100% malolactic fermentation. 8 months sur lees aging and 10 months in 40% new French oak barrels. · *Moderate golden yellow color with a slight haze (unfiltered) in the glass. An array of appealing aromas emerge over time in the glass including lemon, grilled grapefruit, fresh brioche, pastry cream and toffee. Delicious core of discreetly rich lemon, grapefruit and pineapple fruits accented with a buttery toffee note. Crisp on the palate with a slight creamy texture and a bright, refreshing finish. The wine became more appealing over time in the glass to the point that I hated to stop sipping. My wife, who is quite the Chardonnay connoisseur, loved this wine as well.* **94**



2012 Rhys Vineyards Alpine Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnay

13.4% alc., \$69. From 3.51 acres of tightly spaced vines planted on low vigor rootstock onto which are grafted a field mixture of heritage selections of Chardonnay (Wente, Hyde, Mt. Eden). Soils are 18" - 24" rocky topsoil over Monterey Shale. Gently whole cluster pressed for 4 hours. The must is settled overnight and in the morning the barrels are filled by gravity. 20-25% new French oak barrels are used. The wine is left undisturbed in barrel without stirring, completing a native yeast fermentation that can sometimes take an entire year. · *Golden yellow color and clear in the glass. This is a subtle wine that reveals many nuances over time if you are patient. There is a clear vein of "minerality" running through this wine evident in the sea brine aromas and the vibrant underlying acidity. The flavors of apple, white peach, crème brûlée, and a hint of butterscotch are inviting, and the silky texture of the wine is dreamy. There is some finishing length as well, uncommon in many Chardonnays from California. With the modest alcohol and bright acidity, this is an ideal food wine, but it is wonderful on its own. Should be even more interesting in a few years. For connoisseur's only.* **95**



2012 Stomping Girl Hyde Vineyard Carneros Chardonnay

14.1% alc., \$40. Wente and Robert Young clones. Gently whole pressed with free-run juice sent to French oak barrels (one new, the rest neutral) at a cool temperature. Aged sur lie with regular lees stirring. The wine clear naturally, without fining or filtration, and was bottled with a single racking before bottling. · *Light golden yellow color in the glass. The aromas pull you into the glass, with bright notes of lemon curd, pear, toast and subtle vanilla. Delicious lemon, pear and apple flavors in a bright, crisp and clean style with a slightly creamy mouthfeel. Amazing fruit goodness. Beautifully balanced with noticeable length on the finish. All you could ask for in a Chardonnay. Drink this one on a sunny day with your best friends. 94*



2011 Thomas Fogarty Estate Grown Langley Hill Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnay

13.8% alc., pH 3.13, TA 0.87, 96 cases, \$60. · *Moderate golden straw color and clear in the glass. Highly aromatic, with bright aromas of croissant, roasted nuts, baked apple and lemon. Plenty of intensity showing lemon curd, baked pear, apple and almond flavors backed by a lively, but integrated, cut of acidity. Very smooth in the mouth with an incredibly bombastic finish that offers waves of lemony goodness returning for what seems like a minute. I have rarely met with a finish like this in Chardonnay. On top of that, the wine is very harmonious with just the right amount of contribution from oak. 94*



2014 California & Oregon Value Priced Chardonnay All-Americans

- 2011 Anaba Sonoma Coast Chardonnay (90 - \$28)
- 2011 Anaba Cutton Ranch Russian River Valley Chardonnay (92 - \$36)
- 2012 Anaba Denmark Vineyard Wente Clone Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** (94 - \$34)
- 2010 Ceja Estate Napa Valley Carneros Chardonnay (90 - \$34)
- 2013 CrossBarn by Paul Hobbs Sonoma Coast Chardonnay (89 - \$25)
- 2011 J. K. Carriere Lucidité Willamette Valley Chardonnay (90 - \$32)
- 2012 J. Lohr Highlands Bench Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay (89 - \$25)
- 2012 J. Lohr Arroyo Vista Arroyo Seco Monterey Chardonnay (92 - \$25)
- 2012 Les Voleurs Sonoma Coast Chardonnay (90 - \$22)
- 2012 LIOCO Estero Russian River Valley Chardonnay (88 - \$35)
- 2012 Lombardi Sonoma Coast Chardonnay (90 - \$36)
- 2012 Longplay “Jory Slope” Lia’s Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Chardonnay (92 - \$28)
- 2012 Lynmar Estate Russian River Valley Chardonnay (89 - \$30)
- 2012 Pali Wine Co. Charm Acres Sonoma Coast Chardonnay (89 - \$21)
- 2012 Roots Fairsing Vineyard Yamhill Carlton Willamette Valley Chardonnay (90 - \$35)
- 2012 Sequoia Grove Napa Valley Chardonnay (90 - \$28)
- 2012 Seven of Hearts Gran Moraine Vineyard Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Chardonnay (90 - \$32)
- 2011 Smith-Madrone Vineyards & Winery Spring Mountain District Napa Valley Chardonnay (93 - \$30)
- 2012 Stoller Family Estate Reserve Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Chardonnay (91 - \$35)
- 2012 Talbott Kali-Hart Estate Grown Monterey Chardonnay (89 - \$20)
- 2013 The Wonderland Project “La Reine Blanche” (The White Queen) Sonoma County Chardonnay (90 - \$24)

First Encounters of Noteworthy Pinot Noir Producers in 2014

New wineries continue to join the Pinot race. Not a week goes by that I don't find out about a new producer of Pinot Noir. The Pinot winery universe has become very crowded, but I found the following producers noteworthy based on my initial sampling of their wines. Because they are new, many of these wineries offer Pinot Noir that has a high quality to value ratio. A few of the wineries are established but 2014 was the first year I met with their wines.

California

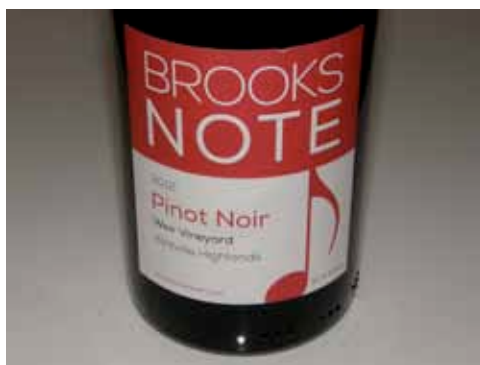
Alma Fria West Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from the Holtermann family. Wines are crafted by Carroll Kemp (Red Car). www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2424

Angel Camp Vineyard Brian Zalaznick and Cindy Storman bought the Angel Camp property in the Anderson Valley in 2005 and planted 9 clones of Pinot Noir over 12 acres in 2006. Winemaker for Angel Camp Vineyard Pinot Noir was Jon Keyes for the 2011, 2012 and 2013 vintages, with Phil Baxter stepping in beginning with the 2014 vintage. Grapes are also sold to Dutton-Goldfield, Chanamé and Donum Estate. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2207

BARDEN A collaboration between winemaker Doug Margerum of Margerum Wine Company in Santa Barbara and winemaker Jason Barrette. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2392

brick & mortar Owner and winemaker Matt Iaconis launched this label in 2011 specializing in Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from Napa Valley's Antinori Vineyard. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2345

Brooks Note A Marin-based winery focusing on Pinot Noir. Garry Brooks and Joanne Brooks launched the label in 2011. He left a lucrative job in technology and earned a degree in viticulture and enology from University of California at Davis. He has trained at Acacia, Kosta Browne and Dutton-Goldfield. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2439



Chanamé James Hahn and spouse Mila Chanamé released their first Pinot Noir from Anderson Valley in 2011. The wines are made from grapes sourced by James' childhood friend, Norman Kobler, who is a partner and general manager of Ardzooni Vineyard Management. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2342

Cosa Obra Wines An excellent Pinot Noir is offered using grapes sourced from vineyards and in the Russian River and Bennett valleys. The consulting winemaker is Kent Humphrey (Eric Kent Wines). www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2388

Dolin Malibu Estate Vineyards A leading producer in the burgeoning Malibu Coast AVA. Besides Malibu Chardonnay, a line of Pinot Noirs from Central Coast vineyards was released in 2014 (see reviews next issue). www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2330

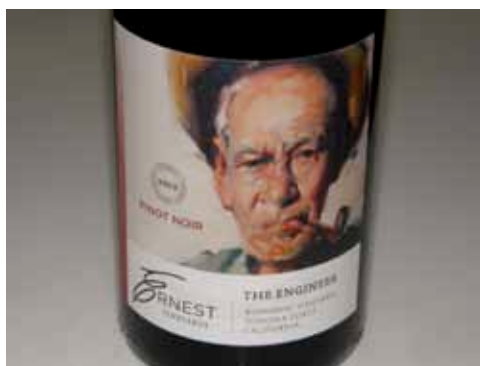
Domaine Anderson This new Anderson Valley winery was founded by the Rouzard family of Louis Roederer and is located in Philo across the street from Goldeneye's tasting room. The winery is surrounded by the 17-

acre Dach Vineyard planted to Pinot Noir. Production is complimented by grapes from Roederer's additional 35 acres of vineyards in Anderson Valley. The winemaker is Jerry Murray and the consulting winemaker is Jeremy Seysses of Domaine Dujac. The inaugural releases from the 2012 vintage included an Estate Pinot Noir and Chardonnay wine, and two single vineyard Pinot Noirs from Dach Vineyard and a single vineyard Chardonnay from Walraven Vineyard. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2415

E16 Wine Company Third generation winegrower Robert Jones is assisted by winemaker Daniel Moore, producing Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from sourced grapes. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2396

En Garde Winery Proprietor and winemaker Csaba Szakal is a fourth generation winemaker from Hungary. En Garde was started in 2007 producing multiple varietals from sourced grapes including a Russian River Valley and Russian River Valley Reserve Pinot Noir. A tasting room is on Sonoma Highway in Kenwood. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/1853

Ernest Vineyards Co-owners Todd Gottula and Erin Brooks produce Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir and Russian River Valley Chardonnay with winemaker Kent Humphrey (Eric Kent Wines). The brand is named after Ernest Gottula, Todd's paternal grandfather who graces the front label of the wines. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2197



FEL Wines A new winery from the Lede Family Wines portfolio who bought Savoy Vineyard in the Anderson Valley. Pinot Noir and aromatic white wines are crafted by winemaker Ryan Hodgins using fruit sourced from Anderson Valley (include the estate Savory Vineyard) and Sonoma Coast. The inaugural releases came from the 2012 vintage. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2373

Jeff Cohn Cellars (JC Cellars) A small urban winery located in Jack London Square in Oakland, California owned by winemaker Jeff Cohn. After graduating from California State University at Fresno, he worked for Rosenblum Cellars, and his Jeff Cohn Cellars became one of the first urban wineries to offshoot from Rosenblum Cellars, the original Bay Area urban winery. Cohn left Rosenblum in 2006 to concentrate on his own wines. Most of production is Rhone varietals and Zinfandel. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2410

Kitá Winemaker Tara Gomez is a graduate of California State University at Fresno with a degree in enology. After school, she worked nine years at J. Lohr Vineyards. After a stint making wine in Spain, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumesh Indians acquired the Camp 4 Vineyard and hired Tara as winemaker. The assistant winemaker is Tymari LoRe, a graduate of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in enology and viticulture. Several varietals are produced including Pinot Noir from Hilliard Bruce Vineyard in the Sta. Rita Hills. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2255

Les Voleurs Wines This is an urban San Francisco winery founded by Matthew Purdon and Keith Crowell. Both owners have a background in winemaking. Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are produced from Sonoma Coast grapes. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2385

Lombardi Wines Tony Lombardi, the Director of Brand Management and Public Relations at Kosta Browne Winery started his own label beginning with the 2012 vintage, producing small lots of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from Sonoma County vineyards. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2428

LUTUM A collaboration between Bill Price, owner of Classic Wines and Price Family Vineyards, and Santa Barbara County winemaker Gavin Chanin. The first releases from the 2011 vintage included a Durell Vineyard

Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir and a La Rinconada Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2320

Martin Ray Winery The historic Martini & Pratti Winery was acquired by Courtney Benham in 2003 and renamed Martin Ray Winery. Both value-priced and ultra-premium wines are produced. My first experience this year was three limited production Pinot Noirs were of very high quality. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/755

Patiné Cellars A partnership between Jim Fox, a former professional hockey player with the Los Angeles Kings, and winemaker Mike Smith. Pinot Noirs are offered from Gap's Crown and Sun Chase vineyards located in the Petaluma Gap region of the Sonoma Coast. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2374

Picayune Cellars Owners Jennifer Roberts (spouse of Nathan Roberts, co-owner of Arnot Roberts Winery) and Claire Weinkauff (spouse of Aron Weinkauff, the winemaker at Spottswode Winery) produce exciting wines at reasonable price points. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2202

Press Cellars Proprietor Patrick Campbell works with vinyardist Sal Galvan to produce a Pinot Noir from the Helluva Vineyard in Anderson Valley. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2515

Ram's Gate Winery Veteran winemaker Jeff Gaffner (Black Kite Cellars, Saxon Brown) crafts the wines for this popular destination Sonoma Carneros Winery. Multiple Pinot Noirs are offered from Sonoma County vineyard sources. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/1755

Sandhi Wines Sommelier Rajat Parr joined with Charles Banks, the former owner of Jonata Wines and Screaming Eagle, and winemaker Sashi Moorman, to produce Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from selected vineyards in Santa Barbara County. The Pinot Noirs are mostly whole cluster fermented with wild yeast and aged in a low percentage of new French oak. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/1498

Sanglier Cellars Glenn Alexander owns Bacchus Vineyard Management which manages over 400 acres of vineyards for prestigious wineries such as Kosta Browne, Copain, Paul Hobbs and Pahlmeyer. Since 2006, the Alexander family has produced wine from family farmed vineyards. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/1917



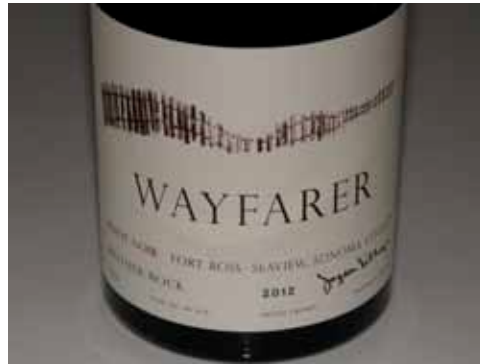
Schermeister Cellars Winemaker Robert Schermeister offers a vineyard-designated Napa Carneros Pinot Noir from Paladini Vineyard. Schermeister was mentored by Mark Aubert. His inaugural release was from the 2012 vintage. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2441

Senses Wines Three childhood friends, Christopher Strieter, Max Thieriot and Myles Lawrence-Briggs reunited after many years to produce Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from vineyards near their hometown of Occidental. The winemaking consultant is Thomas Brown (Rivers-Marie). www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2279

Ser Wine Company Nicole Walsh is a veteran winemaker including a long stint with Bonny Doon Vineyard. She launched her own label in 2012 producing multiple varietals including Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2505

Signal Ridge Roger Scommengna planted a vineyard off Signal Ridge Road in the Mendocino Ridge AVA in 1999. At 2,642 feet, it is the highest altitude vineyard in the North Coast. The inaugural Signal Ridge Pinot Noir is from the 2013 vintage, crafted by winemaker Nicole Scommengna. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2413

Wayfarer Vineyard This vineyard in the Fort Ross-Seaview AVA of the Sonoma Coast is owned by Jayson Pahlmeyer. Fruit from the 2012 vintage was deemed suitable for a separate Wayfarer Vineyard label. Winemaker Bibiana Gonzalez Rave oversees the vineyard and wine production, and in the fall of 2014 released the first estate Wayfarer Vineyard Pinot Noir and Chardonnay wines from the 2012 vintage. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2394



Wait Cellars Robert Wait crafts limited lots of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay at Bluxome Street Winery in San Francisco's SOMA district. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/953

Wild Ridge Wild Ridge Pinot Noir comes from a vineyard on the far western edge of the Sonoma Coast near the hamlet of Annapolis. The winemaker is New Zealand native Craig McAllister. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2427

Witching Stick Wines Owners Van and Anne Williamson produce Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, along with other varietals, from primarily Anderson Valley vineyards. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2208

Oregon

Chapter 24 Mark Tarlov, the former owner of Evening Land Vineyards, launched this winery in 2012 producing Willamette Valley Pinot Noir. The winemaker is Mike D. "Mikey" Etzel and consulting winemaker is Louis Michel Liger-Belair from Burgundy. Three price levels include Two Messengers, Fire + Flood, and Last Chapter. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2163

Durant Vineyards The Durant Family has farmed vineyards in the Dundee Hills of Oregon since 1973 and have supplied grapes to many premier Willamette Valley wineries. Over 60 acres are dry farmed. Wines were first produced under the Durant Vineyard label in 2003. Several winemakers are involved. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/972.

Ghost Hill Cellars A small family owned vineyard and winery in the Yamhill-Carlton District of the Willamette Valley. The winemaker is Rebecca Pittock-Shouldis. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/875

Formagalini Vineyards David de Lancellotti launched this label as a family project with the first Pinot Noir release from the 2012 vintage from a small, non-irrigated and biodynamically-farmed vineyard in the Chehalem Mountains. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2485

Guillén Family Wines A very small winery owned by talented winemaker Jesus Guillén who is also the assistant winemaker at White Rose Estate. Pinot Noir is crafted from Dundee Hills vineyards using the "neo-classical objective" employed at White Rose Estate. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2327

Gypsy Dancer Estates The label founded by deceased winemaker Gary Andrus has been revived by his widow, Christine Andrus beginning with the 2012 vintage. Rebecca Pittock Shouldis is the winemaker. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2041

J. Wrigley Vineyard The Wrigley family produces small lots of Pinot Noir, Riesling and Pinot Gris from the 6-acre estate vineyard in the McMinnville AVA and some purchased fruit. The label was launched in 2010 with the first estate wine offered the following year. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2351

J.K. Carriere An established winery in the Chehalem Mountains owned by winemaker Jim Prosser. Both estate and sourced fruit are used in production of wines that have a reputation for longevity.

www.princeofpinot.com/winery/435

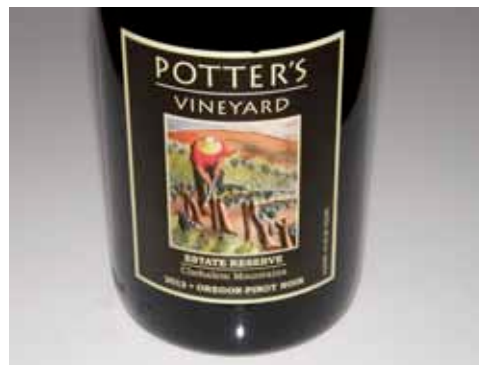


Knudsen Vineyards The children of noted winegrower Cal Knudsen are carrying on his tradition by creating Knudsen Vineyards in 2013, focusing on Pinot Noir from grapes their father planted in the Dundee Hills.

www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2479

Olenik Vineyards Pinot Noir from a 14.7-acre vineyard split off from the Jacob-Hart Vineyard in 2005. The winemaker is Christopher Mazepink (Archery Summit). www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2430

The Potter's Vineyard Bill and Sandy Sanchez acquired the former Laura Volkman property before harvest in 2012. The new label invokes the memory of the Laura Volkman label. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2429



Purple Hands A small winery producing Willamette Valley Pinot Noir owned by winemaker Cody Wright, the son of noted Oregon winemaker, Ken Wright. Cody is also an assistant winemaker at ROCO Winery.

www.princeofpinot.com/winery/1502

WildAire Cellars Proprietor and winemaker Matt Driscoll crafts his wines at Illahe Vineyards in the Willamette Valley. He sources grapes from several AVAs, including the noted Shea Vineyard. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/1315

Youngberg Hill Vineyards 21 acres of vineyards and a spectacular 50-acre hilltop estate incorporating an inn in the McMinnville AVA. The Bailey family crafts Pinot Noir from estate and purchased fruit. The tasting room is located within the inn. www.princeofpinot.com/winery/890

Winery of Year: White Rose Estate

I wrote enthusiastically about White Rose Estate earlier this year in the *PinotFile*: www.princeofpinot.com/article/1524/ and readers should refer to this for in-depth coverage.

Greg Sanders is the mid behind White Rose Estate and the innovative wines produced here based on a “Neo-Classical Objective.” Greg bought the 10-acre White Rose Vineyard in the Dundee Hills in the summer of 2000. Having found satisfaction as the owner of a moderately large manufacturing company in Los Angeles, Greg had begun to look for a different pursuit that offered an emotional connection and found it in wine. He embarked on an exhaustive exploration of Pinot Noir wines, beginning with ones from California, then Burgundy and Oregon. He tasted all the wines from the established labels and studied them in depth to learn what made them special and what allowed the better wines to improve with age. Eventually he arrived at his “aha” moment, and decided the key was an old vine vineyard.



White Rose Vineyard had been planted to Pommard clone on its own roots between 1978 and 1982. The photo above shows the established vines and new interplantings in 2014. The east-southeast-facing vineyard planted in volcanic Jory soils is well placed with prominent producers such as Archery Summit, Domaine Serene, and Domaine Drouhin Oregon located nearby. The vineyard sits at 879 feet elevation and its location provides an extended growing season that lends itself to harvest in late October. This allows for slow phenolic development, balanced sugars and acids, and mature stems. Because of the resulting quality of the grapes, Greg has called his vineyard, “One of the ten best vineyards in the New World.”

An adjacent 4 acres were acquired in 2009, planted to Dijon 115 clone grafted to American rootstock, and named the Guillém Vineyard after Jesus Guillén who has managed the White Rose Vineyard since 2002, and his son, also named Jesus Guillén, who is Greg’s assistant winemaker. Greg also sources fruit from a number of the Willamette Valley’s top growers in the Yamhill-Carlton District, Dundee Hills, and Chehalem Mountains appellations.

What is particularly impressive about Greg is that he is a self-taught winemaker (he prefers the term, “producer”) who made his first wine in 1999 and his first commercial White Rose Vineyard Pinot Noir in 2001.

His winemaking expertise has evolved slowly over the past 13 years tied to the emotional connection he has with wine. The culmination of his efforts led to the term which summarizes his goal, “The Neo-Classical Objective,” first coined in 2011. This encompasses a highly innovative approach among Willamette Valley vintners and is somewhat polarizing in its theory. Greg does not consider it revolutionary, however, since it is soundly based in Old World winemaking techniques.



There are two parts to The Neo-Classical Objective: the “why” and the “how.” The “how” is the simpler of the two parts, while the “why” is the impetus but more difficult to elucidate. Let me start with the “why” first. Simply put, **neo-classical refers to an alternate presentation of wine that elevates “pinotnoirness” above everything else.** The word “classic” refers to the many presentations of pinotnoirness over multiple generations, while the “neo” refers to Greg’s contemporary adaptation.

The first requirement to achieve the neo-classical objective is to have vines old enough to make a wine that is age worthy. There must be enough phenolic and tannin components to outlast the process of oxidation over time. Tannins cannot be overriding initially as the wine will be austere initially, requiring years to oxidize, often reaching an acceptable level at the time the phenolics (fruit flavors) have dissipated.

The second requirement is that the vineyard must be in the correct location, produce quality fruit, and be subject to the proper temperature such that the resultant wine can achieve a sense of pinotnoirness. In the classic sense, the grapes should reach a state of crispness and freshness, preferably with cherry, raspberry and blackberry flavors. Greg gives the following analogy. If you randomly pick nine cherries and put them in the palm of your hand, three will be dark and concentrated (very ripe), three will be crisp and fresh, and three will be lean and tart. The most desirable cherries for a classically driven Pinot Noir are the crisp and fresh ones. As a corollary, the time of the picking decision is critical.

The “how” refers to Greg’s current approach to handling the fruit, skin and seed tannins both in the vineyard and in the winery. Too little tannin and the wine will not last, and too much tannin will produce an edgy wine initially that will need years for the tannins to resolve. In past generations, the tannins were often overwhelming initially, something Greg avoids completely. **The ultimate objective is to craft a wine that is good from day one, yet will undergo a metamorphosis over time, not becoming necessarily better, but different.**

Ideally, Greg would prefer that much of the skin tannins have oxidized away on the vine at the same time as the grape phenolics reach ideal ripeness. Tannins are antioxidants so that as they diminish, the increased available oxygen can ripen the phenolics. Invariably, some tannin remains at harvest, but Greg times his picking so that he manage the associated astringency. In the cellar, punch downs are avoided to prevent rupture of berries and the release of harsh, bitter seed tannins into solution (gentle punch overs are used instead). Post-fermentation, the must is pressed off using a laborious old world basket press. that avoids breakage of seeds and stems. In addition, post-fermentation maceration is minimized, again to avoid extracting too much additional tannin. Seed tannins are an anathema because they take so long to oxidize the wine is left with little enjoyable fruit.

Once Greg's wines are in barrel, the process is routine. The wines are typically aged for 16 months in a low percentage of new French oak barrels, racked once after malolactic fermentatiion, and then again just before blending. They are bottled unfined and unfiltered.

Pinot Noirs produced by Greg from old vines in the neo-classical objective mode, are fermented 100% whole cluster. He is not the least bit worried about the stems, only the flavor, phenolic intensity and tannins. In some years, tannin management is not ideal, and some mild herbaceous character may creep in, which may not appeal to all Pinot Noir drinkers. Still, Greg is undaunted, for the nuances, texture, and haunting aromas and flavors, and age ability associated with whole cluster fermentation are too desirable in his opinion to think about pursuing another winemaking tact.

In summary, to achieve the neo-classical objective of pinotnoirness and age ability and present the varietal in a manner such that it has the greatest potential to generate an emotional connection to the wine:

- (1) Farm on old vine Pinot Noir vineyard planted to quality clones or selections appropriate for the site.
- (2) The vineyard must be located in the proper microclimate as growing temperatures dictate success.
- (3) Pick the grapes at precisely the time of ideal crispness and freshness and modest tannic astringency.
- (4) Gently handle the fruit in the winery with efforts to avoid excessive extraction of tannin, particularly seed tannin
- (5) Use 100% whole cluster fermentation.
- (6) Press the must manually and gently with a basket press.
- (7) Minimize new oak.

Over the past 13 years, Greg has expended considerable effort in improving the grounds of his property, the tasting room, and the winery, so it will connect with visitor's emotions and the "White Rose experience." The tasting room is unique in that it has no windows to distract the visitor from the wines. In the cellar, elaborate mood lighting and uniform sanding of the barrels creates an intimate and engaging atmosphere.



I tasted the following wines both at the winery and at home using my normal tasting regimen. I find the wines display a haunting floral and exotic spice aroma and flavor associated with the high percentage whole cluster ferments. For myself, and a number of other pinotphiles, whole cluster aromatics are like catnip for humans. Herbaceous characters were extremely subtle to absent in these wines. The wines were elegant and sleek, with unaggressive tannins, and commendable pinotosity (my term for Greg's pinotnoirness). Oak is not intrusive. All the wines could be thoroughly enjoyed now but will age.

Greg was excited about the 2012 vintage wines. He does not recall a vintage with so much potential. "The 2012 vintage was reminiscent of 2002 and 2008. It was warmer than average and certainly warmer than the cooler vintages of 2007, 2010 and 2011, but cooler than the really warm vintages of 2003, 2006 and 2009. While the wines are dense and rich on the palate, they are extremely well balanced with sufficient acidity. Unlike wines from the warmest vintages where the fruit takes on an over ripe, stewed character, the wines from 2012 consistently retain a fresh, vibrant sense of fruit. Retaining this freshness is critically important to our winemaking goals at White Rose Estate. I certainly appears that 2012 will live up the hype."

I would encourage readers to experience these wines for their uniqueness. A number of Oregon wineries are experimenting with some whole cluster inclusion in their ferments. Other than Broadley Vineyards, Cristom Vineyards and Thomas Geerie Wines, I know of no other Oregon wineries so full committed to whole cluster vinification.

White Rose Estate is located at 6250 NE Hilltop Lane in Dayton, Oregon. The tasting room is open daily from 11:00 to 5:00. Tours are available by appointment. The wines are sold through a mailing list and on the website at www.whiterosewines.com. The Explorer's Club offers unique bottlings. For example, in 2012, wines were offered to Explorer Club members that were produced from different elevations. Different clonal bottlings from the same vineyard will be offered from the 2013 vintage. The Neo-Classical Club offers members wines that are collectable and age worthy.

2011 White Rose Estate "The Neo-Classical Objective" Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 416 cases, \$80. White Rose Vineyard (35%), Vista Hills Vineyard (31%, 115 and 777), and Murto Vineyard (34%, Pommard, Wädenswil and 115). 100% whole cluster fermentation. 23 to 25-day skin contact. Aged 16 months in 9% new French oak barrels. *Moderate light reddish purple color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with hi-tone aromas of spice, potpourri, pipe smoke and rose petal. Elegant, juicy and refreshing, with mid weight flavors of cherry and smoky spices. The fine-grain tannins are modest and the wine finishes with a charming burst of cherry fruit. Builds in flavor intensity in the glass over time and is much more giving the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. This relatively delicate wine delivers the neo-classical objective of pinotnoirness.* 92

2012 White Rose Estate Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., pH 3.63, 1,094 cases, \$40. A blend of 9 vineyards with multiple clones. 73% whole cluster fermentation. Aged 11 months in 11% new French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Appealing aromas of cherry, spice, red rose, oak and tea leaves. Soft and smooth on the palate with a good grip and intensity featuring black cherry and raspberry fruits caressed by supple tannins. A very good entry wine to sample the White Rose style.* 89

2012 White Rose Estate "The Neo-Classical Objective" Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., 428 cases, \$80. After meticulously tasting barrel samples blind before bottling, only vineyards that meet the neo-classical objective for a given vintage are selected for this blend. White Rose Vineyard (11%), Anderson Family Vineyard (17%), Guillén Vineyard (28%), Lia's Vineyard (22%), and Luciole Vineyard (11%). Pommard, Wädenswil, 777 and 115 clones. 100% whole cluster fermentation, 16 to 26-day skin contact, aged 16 months in 14% new French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Lovely aromas of black cherry, dark red rose petal, toasty oak, and exotic spice. This wine fills the mouth with a suave fruit attack and holds on through a tenacious finish that sports some fine-grain but minimally astringent tannins. The middleweight flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and spice are sparkling and fresh. Significantly more richness than the 2011 version of this wine. A superb wine that will be intriguing over time.* 93-94

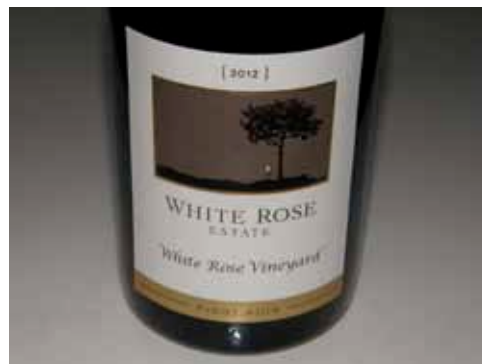


2012 White Rose Estate Guillén Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.70, 188 cases, \$70. 9-day cold soak, 100% whole cluster fermentation, 21 to 22-day skin contact. Aged 16 months in 19% new French oak barrels. *Medium reddish purple hue in the glass. The nose offers a range of aromas including black cherry pie glaze, baking spice, potpourri and a hint of smoky oak. Plenty of robust fruit including black cherries, red plums and blueberries accented with exotic spices. Soft and velvety on the palate with a good spark of underlying acidity. Still has some unresolved tannins that will require short term cellaring.* **92**

2012 White Rose Estate Anderson Family Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., pH 3.71, 118 cases, \$90. Self-rooted Dijon 115. 9-day cold soak, 100% whole cluster fermentation, 26 days total skin contact, aged 16 months in 10% new French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, dark red rose and cardamom spice lead to a mid weight + palate of dark stone fruits embellished with delicious spice. The wine is long and silky in the mouth and finishes with spectacular intensity with the fruit returning for several encores. The flavor is eye-opening and the texture is intriguing. Still solid the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **94**

2012 White Rose Estate Winemaker's Cuvée Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., pH 3.62, 257 cases, \$90. A special cuvée blended from favorite barrels in the cellar chosen by winemaker Jesus Guillén. A blend of White Rose, Guillén, Vista Hills, Luciole and Red Hills vineyards. 6 to 9-day cold soak, 93% whole cluster fermentation, 20-26 days of skin contact, aged 16 months in 9% new French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is a knockout with bright aromas of black cherry, sarsaparilla, smoky rose petal and spice. This wine is a textural masterpiece with waves of velvety goodness. The ripe flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and spice really impress and are framed by a good grip of acidity and a compliment of modestly firm, fine-grain tannins. The finish is incredibly long and vibrant. I like this wine more the longer I sampled it. It was extraordinary the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle showing an explosion of spicy fruit goodness and a very sleek demeanor.* **94-95**

2012 White Rose Estate White Rose Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 12.9% alc., pH 3.77, 235 cases, \$125. Low yields of 0.5 tons per acre due to poor set. Self-rooted Pommard clone. 6-day cold soak, 100% whole cluster fermentation, 20 to 21-day skin contact, aged 16 months in 10% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. This is a very elegant and refined wine with considerable freshness. The aromas of cherry, raspberry, wilted rose, and spice jump from the glass. The core of cherry, raspberry and pomegranate fruits is complimented by a vein of spice and leaf in the background. The very slight herbaceous note adds a bit of savoriness and is not at all off putting to me. This wine has more polished tannins than the Winemaker's Cuvée and slightly brighter tension. The peacock finish is incredibly long and satisfying.* **95-96**



2008 White Rose Estate White Rose Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc.. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, stem, roasted nuts, graham and chocolate. Mid weight + flavors of cherry, black raspberry and cranberry with a touch of brioche, tobacco and cola. Intense on the attack with a burst of cherry fruit, finishing with good length. The tannins are well-integrated and the texture is very smooth. Plenty of lively fruit to last another five years easily.* **91**

Best Wine Quotes of 2014

Quotes have relevance in a historical context. They tell us about the topics and controversies that are prevalent at a certain time. They also represent a gift that says plenty with few words.

"Making Cabernet Sauvignon is like coming home every night to the best black Labrador you'd ever owned. No matter how long you'd been gone, or how late it was, the dog-tail wagging - was thrilled to see you. Making Pinot Noir was like coming home to the worst cat. The cat would look at you as if to say, Where the hell have you been?" ...Winemaker Scott Rich to Karen MacNeil

"It upsets me when I hear people say that a little bit of Brett is ok in Pinot Noir. I think, obviously you don't know what it is like without it, or you wouldn't say that. It takes the magic away."Matt Thomson, *The Science of Wine*

"If we can chew the stems through them we'll put them in. I'd put in 100% whole clusters if we could. It's a better ferment."Nick Mills, winemaker at Rippon, NZ

"The use of stems in Burgundy is on the rise, in part because a warming climate has allowed for more mature flavors in the stems, and because of the absence of one of the most respected advocates of destemmed fruit, the deceased Henri Jaye." Jamie Goode, wineanorak.com

"What I take issue with is this sense of self-importance some New World tastemasters (some of them are also winemakers) ascribe to their personal interpretation of what they believe Pinot Noir to be."Alfonso Cevola

"Pinot Noir is the glass coffee table of grapes. If you start putting your hands on it, you're going to leave fingerprints." John Dragonette

"With Pinot Noir I'm looking for perfume, freshness, delicacy, texture and harmony...and I'm also looking for that sweet attack at the front of the palate which you get with good Pinot." Richard Bampfield, MW

"I think that marginal ripening is the key to successful varieties but especially for persnickety Pinot where the window of optimum maturity is so short."Mark Savage MW

"On one hand, New Zealand's best vineyards are producing increasingly multidimensional, detailed Pinots. And on the other hand, leafroll virus is threatening to rain on this parade by preventing existing plantings of the grape to reach full maturity. It's the single biggest issue."Steve Smith, *Wine & Spirits*

"We are currently stuck in a dead-end where alcoholic, unpleasant, food-antagonistic wines fetch high scores and command high prices, while wines that are actually pleasant to drink are too often overlooked."Curtis Phillips, *Wine Business Monthly*

"Young wines are exciting; old ones can be moving." Hugh Johnson, *The World of Fine Wine*

"One thing a profound wine always does is to seize your imagination and hurl it a thousand feet into the air. That is the story you need to tell, so peer back at the innocent bottle, and nod a small thanks for showing the way to the sky." Terry Thiese, *The Journal of Fine Wine*

"There are 6,000 Californian Pinot Noirs and more than 4,000 of them are in the same bottle. That's 4,000 brands trying to tell you they are best using only a four-inch piece of paper. No wonder the wine consumer is dazed and confused."Kevin Shaw, *Wine Business Monthly*

"The 'middle' is falling out of the market and any producer in the middle is 'dead' as it has no future. There is now only 'value' and 'luxury' positioning."Sir John Hegarty

I think that many sommeliers today need to evolve to the level of chefs. We talk a lot about farm to table, low carbon footprints, etc., but what about vineyard to table? If we go to France, Italy, Spain....we rarely, if ever,

see the wines any country except the one we are in....In most cases, we only see the wines of the particular region we are visiting. In this country, it's almost as if we are embarrassed by our own wines. We often see them treated as bastard children, New York restaurants being the biggest culprit."Emmanuel Kemiji MS, Wine & Spirits

"You should drink organic wine but drink it because it is good and not because it says it's organic on the label. The entire wine industry would be more credible if consumers trusted their palates more and trusted marketing departments less."Miles Edlmann, The Journal of Fine Wine

"Organic practices are often more damaging to the environment than the chemical alternatives." Miles Edlmann, The Journal of Fine Wine

"If you look back at the 10,000-year history of civilization, it's intimately intertwined with alcohol. Some say the reason people stopped being nomads is that they wanted to ferment stuff. Then there's the counterargument, which is that they stopped moving and then things started fermenting."Alexander Rose, Sunset

"Wine is tribal. It's one of our most ancient foods, so it isn't surprising that in a postmodern, globalized world, the primal attractions of wine would lead people to band together around it."Joshua Green, Wine & Spirits

"Myself and a couple pals said, 'We spend a lot of money on wine, let's make our own, it will be cheaper.' That has proven to be one of the most ignorant things that has ever come out of my mouth."Les Claypool, owner Claypool Cellars

"I believe half of what people think are managed inoculations, are actually more influenced by native yeasts, or a mixture of both."Peter Mathis, winemaker at Ravenswood, Wine Business Monthly

"We would like to think winemakers have a good idea of what they're doing. But most vintners I know admit that they do what they think is right and hope for the best."Harvey Steiman, Wine Spectator

"There's a wine inside of me trying to get out, and that's what I'm trying to make."Cathy Corison, winemaker at Corison

"Grapes on the vine taste nothing like finished wine, which depends primarily on flavors and aromas developed during fermentation and aging. What few elements are fully formed in the grapes are covered up by 25% sugar and accompanied by zero alcohol. So when winemakers can find the right balance point in ripening grapes and think ahead to how the fermented juice might taste in the glass, that's pretty amazing. No automated lab analyzer can handle the job."Tim Patterson, Wines & Vines

"There is no downside to aging wines sealed with a twist-off, and the upside is obvious. No cork-tainted time bombs ticking away in the cellar....twist-off caps do a better job of preserving a wine's expression of terroir. Those elements that reflect the place where the grapes grew to make the wine are muted by even a low level of cork taint and amplified by freshness. For me, that's game, set and match."Harvey Steiman, Wine Spectator

"For me, a vine seems to enter its prime around twenty-five to thirty years of age. Young vines can certainly express terroir, but the expression is perhaps not as strong, not as consistent and usually, there is something that falls a little short on the texture front." Jeremy Seyses, Domaine Dujac, Wine & Spirits

"In chemical terms, minerality is an ill-defined quality in wine, but when it does occur it is commonly explained as being terroir character."Jamie Goode, The Science of Wine

"I suppose it (minerality) is easier to describe what it is not, that is, it is not fruity, nor acidity, nor tannins, nor oak, nor richness, nor fleshiness. It is not really a texture either, for texture is in the middle of the palate and minerality is at the end. I think it is just there, a sort of lifted and lively stoniness that brings a sense of grip and also a sense of depth, but it is neither grippy (which is tannin) nor deep (which is fruit). Stephen spurrier, UK wine writer, SOMM Journal

"Though I am well aware of what soil scientists say about minerals or other elements in the soil and the impossibility of their traveling through the vine and into the wine, the roots deep enough into those minerals are affected and the wine shows that effect. I think of minerality as a wet stone quality in a wine."Paul Draper, winemaker at Ridge, SOMM Journal

"There is a distinct difference between the aroma perception and the flavor perception of minerality. Wines that have strong 'mineral' odors do not necessarily have a strong mineral impression on the palate and vice versa. Minerality in taste has a lot to do with acidity, while minerality in smell is a different matter, a little more connected to boxwood and lemon but little to do with the taste of minerality." Ann Krebiehl, The World of Fine Wine

"Take terroir. It's on nearly all wine-moistened lips, yet is routinely defined so broadly as to be vacuous, so vaguely as to be muddled, or so tendentiously as to be merely a marketing tool." David Schildknecht, The World of Fine Wine

"We almost cannot conceive of wine without personifying it."Dr. Ernesto Suarez-Toste, Science of Wine

"The context in which we drink is as important as what we drink."The Manifesto, Alquimie

"What I like in wine is what I cannot control: the unknown. This is precisely the expression of nature."Frédéric Mugnier, The World of Fine Wine

"An intrinsically good wine can easily be dismissed as a result of not allowing sufficient time to listen to it or wait for it to start singing."Mark Savage MW, The World of Fine Wine

"Rarely have I come across a wine where I wanted more oak."Molly Battenhouse, Wine & Spirits

"New oak is like garlic or chili in cooking; if you use too much of it you will kill the flavor."Bo Barrett, winemaker at Chateau Montelena

"Wine has more and more flavor, but it tends to be the same flavor in all wines picked to the criteria of super-ripeness: intense black fruits going in the direction of jam. And even if this is interesting in itself when young, it clashes with food and is likely to have nothing but the grin of alcohol as it ages."Benjamin Lewin MW, The World of Fine Wine

"I am going to flunk a wine that doesn't have intensity."Robert Parker, Jr.

As we come to the end of another year, it is always remarkable to look back at how far the quality of Pinot Noir has come over the last fifty years in this country. I ran across a book, *Wines of California*, written by Robert Lawrence Balzer and published in 1978. Here are some quotes he made about California Pinot Noir in that book which seem laughable today.

"Pinot Noir, both the grape and the wine, remains an enigma to California viticulturists and winemakers alike."

"The shy-bearing vine can be as temperamental as a spoiled child."

"Pinot Noir in California seems to elude even the most intelligent application of enological science in the production of wines comparable in stature to those of the French Côte de Or."

"I can cite isolated examples of superlative California Pinot Noir, but they are few and far between."

Happy Holidays!

“My understanding wife says I am busy with Pinot Noir every waking moment. Not true! I also dream about it.”

